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Teacher Reflective Practice As A Response To Technical Rationalism

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ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, TEACHER REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AS A RESPONSE TO TECHNICAL RATIONALISM, by XYLECIA G. FYNN-AIKINS, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, in the College of Education and Human Development, Georgia State University.

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TEACHER REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AS A RESPONSE TO TECHNICAL RATIONALISM

by

XYLECIA FYNN-AIKINS

Under the Direction of Jodi Kaufmann, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine how an African American teacher in an urban school used reflection to inform her pedagogical practice for her second grade, African American students. In this research, reflection functioned as a response to technical rationalism, a theoretical perspective that relies solely on scientific processes, calculability, and empiricism to determine norms and prescriptions for practice. Practice that emerges solely from technical rationalism often disregards the needs of urban, African American students. As a reflective pedagogical practice has long been theorized as a method to combat injustice through conscious rationalization, in this autoethnographic study, the researcher examined the possibilities of reflection as a response to technorationalism. Autoethnography is a research methodology that allowed the researcher to write from a personal and self-analytical viewpoint as researcher and subject. Data was generated over a nine-week academic quarter. Crystallization was used to allow for the

generation of multiple genres of data, which increased opportunities for constructing meaning and examining the complexities of the research question, as well as for discovering new aspects of one's relationship to a topic. Through reflective daily journaling the researcher chronicled classroom experiences and her responses to those experiences. The data was analyzed thematically. Within each theme, data was further analyzed through writing as a method of inquiry. Data was represented through poetry, narrative writing, and photographed images. The data suggested that reflective practice provides practitioners opportunities to extend beyond mere technicism in order to consider and respond to the needs, interests, and backgrounds of individual students. Through this study the researcher found that her subjectivities, inclusive of the technorationalism, which she critiques, influenced her reflective practice. She found that reflective practice frequently provoked her to confront her own assumptions, as well as change or modify both her thinking and responsiveness towards students and practice. The findings of this research indicate that reflective practice serves as a viable response to technorationalism, thus enabling the practitioner to construct meaning for practice that is not available through sole adherence to technorationalism.

INDEX WORDS: Autoethnography, Character Portrait, Journal, Pedagogy, Poetry, Reflection, Reflective Practice, Self-Study, Subjectivity, Technical Rationalism, Technicism, Urban Education

TEACHER REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AS A RESPONSE TO TECHNICAL RATIONALISM

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XYLECIA FYNN-AIKINS

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work, foremost, to Alecia, Ebenezer Jr. and Xyon. The three of you inspire me to be a better person, a better mother, a better scholar, and a better teacher. You are at the center of my ongoing reflections. This work is also dedicated to my husband, Ebenezer Fynn-Aikins. Thank you for your unwavering support, understanding, and encouragement. It is indeed an honor to be your life partner. Family, I love you and thank God for you daily. This is our accomplishment together.

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Contents

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Large numbers of African American students in urban schools are failing the standardized tests designed to measure academic progress (NAEP, 2011). According to the 2011 Nation's Report Card, African American students show less proficiency in reading than their White counterparts. The Children's Defense Fund 2011 reports that an African American child has a greater chance of being placed in a class for students who have emotional disturbances than in a class for talented and exceptional students. African American students in urban schools are also two to four times more likely to be recommended for counseling for problematic behavior than their White peers (Skiba et al., 2011), and the National Center for Educational Statistics (2011) reported a greater likelihood of African American students dropping out of high school.[1]

Current educational reforms, such as No Child Left Behind (2001) have not advanced the educational experiences of African American students in urban schools (Hilliard, 2002; Kincheloe & Hayes, 2007). Hilliard contends that, "popular public policy proposals are pitiful as a means to change things in substantial and positive ways for the masses of our children, and for African children in general" (2003, p. 161). Rather, these reforms have created a climate of high stakes testing and standardization that are reflective of technical rationalism, a way of thinking

[1] Reference here to reports by agencies such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress **(**NAEP) and the National Center for Educational Statistics is not to suggest that the research and scientific processes used by these agencies should not be scrutinized for their use and interpretation of observable facts and empirical observation. Rather I point to these agencies as their findings have had and continue to bear significant influence on the trends and direction of education in the United States.

and looking at the world that relies on scientific processes, calculability, and empiricism to determine norms and prescriptions for process and procedure. The Nation at Risk report of 1983, the Goals 2000 Act, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, while purporting that all children can learn regardless of race and background, have promoted an educational climate that treats practice as a prescriptive process, unaffected by contexts or experiences. I am careful in my reference to the findings purported by the aforementioned initiatives, as this data often emerges from a technical rationalistic approach to testing and measuring mass numbers of students against a normative standard. However, I reference this data because it has been used to substantiate educational mandates and reforms that directly impact teaching practice in urban schools. In essence, these reform initiatives have homogenized teaching and learning, thus disregarding the utility of practices sensitive to the needs of individual students. Practice that emerges solely from technical rationalism does not facilitate the needs of African American students in the urban classroom because it fails to acknowledge the reality of those needs (Ogbu, 1992). Reform models that homogenize teaching and learning simply perpetuate the academic crisis that technical rationalism (a positivistic theoretical perspective based primarily on observable facts and empirical observation that treats the practitioner as a technicist) has supported. While practitioners should be mindful of educational practice that emerges from positivistic thinking, they should be equally mindful of the kind of science that is used to legitimate this practice. Although Kozol's (1975) claims were made forty years ago, I believe they hold merit and bear consideration even today. Not only did he warn that poorly stated problems can delay social and political action and legislative change, but he noted that we must also be critical of who is posing the questions of research on public schools. He further stipulates that the primary goal of public

school in America is "state indoctrination" (1) of good citizens and ideological manipulation purposed to promote and perpetuate ruling views and beliefs. Hence, teachers who operate with proficiency at mechanical procedures can develop students who operate with proficiency at mechanical procedures (Kozol, 1975).

Craig (2009) contends that the mandates of state and national school reform have "constrained what teachers are able to know and do" (p. 133). Furthermore, the mainstream discourse on educational reform has neglected multiculturalism (King, 2005) and, instead, opted for purely scientific demarcations and classifications that are intended to represent reality and influence social constructions of normalcy and legitimacy (Baez & Boyles, 2009). Although proponents of technicism contend that reforms and standardization make education more equitable, King (1994), Hilliard (2000, 2002), and Ladson-Billings (1995a, 2006) assert that equitable educational experiences for African American students cannot be found in initiatives that are culturally and socially insensitive and privilege White hegemony. Hence, the crisis response(s) of one-size fits all reform models and high stakes testing are ineffective because they ignore diversity in the classroom (Hilliard, 2000).

One response to the current educational crisis has been teacher reflective practice (Foss, 2010; Hoekstra & Korthagen, 2011; Kraft, 2002; Marcos, Miquel &Tillema, 2009). Reflection as a pedagogical response is not a new or a singular practice, and theorists' differing opinions over the characterizations of reflective practice is a testament to this. Perhaps it is the wide scope of reflection that keeps it from falling prey to the monolithic proceduralization of technical rationalism, of which reflective practice is most critical. However, a shared theme in the literature is that reflection compels practitioners to examine the implicit and explicit reasons for instructional and

learning experiences and to use those reasons to draw further conclusions about their own practice. Unlike technical rationalism, which discredits the teacher's ability to operate beyond the prescriptions of curriculum and passive acceptance (Zeichner, Melnick, & Gomez, 1996), reflective practice encourages teachers to consider how prior events and experiences have been layered to yield the current experience (Horwood, 1995). According to Dewey (1933), reflective thinking occurs when the present experience compels the thinker to consider ideas, events, and scenarios that may not be immediately evident. From these deliberations, the practitioner may self-analyze (Cole & Knowles, 1995; Berliner, 1987), make judgments and determinations (Calderhead, 1987), challenge existing norms (Palmer, 1998), consider alternate possibilities (Brookfield, 1987), and imagine new techniques (Greene, 1995; Morley, 2008) that are directed by what she learns through self- study and classroom encounters. In essence, the reflective teacher operates as practitioner-researcher, neither limited nor bound by technical rationalism. While much of the research discusses reflecting *on* practice (Brookfield, 1995; Calderhead, 1987; Edwards, 1994; Hoekstra & Korthagen, 2011; Reis-Jorge, 2007), Schon (1991) asserts that reflecting *in* practice enables the educator to immediately seek meaning in order to construct a response that is contextually relevant. Furthermore, reflecting in practice enables the practitioner to synchronize responses to situations as they unfold (Beck & Kosnik, 2001). In this regard, the classroom becomes a specific context for reflection through which experience and interaction enable the teacher to mediate the gaps between the rhetoric of technicism and the realities of her classroom and its subjects (Valli, 1992; Zeichner, 1995). Ellison (2008) found a reflective practice beneficial in the urban classroom, as it enables the development of a pedagogical practice that is sensitive to the conditions and experiences of a diverse student population.

However, this may not be as easy as it seems. As a novice teacher, I felt that the reason I was not connecting with my students was because my students were simply rebellious, ill-behaved and had no interest in learning. While I instinctively felt that my practice was faulty, I could not assess what elements of my practice were inadequate. Thus, my reflections were no more than shallow thoughts about how rebellious and deficient my students were. Twelve years later, I understand that the hegemony of technicism, upon which I relied, contributed to my inability to provide relevant and appropriate instruction to my students. Even with this understanding, however, I am still very much entrenched in systems and practices that are in accord with technicism. As a contractual employee of a public school system and as a conventionally trained educator, I often defer to technicism amidst the confines of scheduling constraints, curriculum mandates, and policies. Nonetheless, I am not inclined to rebel against technicism for the mere sake of rebellion, but rather to understand how it impacts my ability to offer practice that is equitable, just, relevant, and sensitive to diverse needs. As a teacher of urban students, I am inspired not only by the contextual sensitivity of reflection, but also by how it allows me to consider reasons for classroom encounters and interactions, my interpretations of those encounters, and my responses. Furthermore, unlike technical rationalism, reflection permits me to explore how issues of race, class, politics, and power operate in my classroom and how my own subjectivities enable me to see some of these affectations while hindering my ability to see others.

Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine my reflective experiences as a second grade practitioner in an urban school. Specifically, I explored the following questions:

1. How do I reflect?

2. How do I respond to self, students, and pedagogy?
3. What are the barriers to reflection?

Purpose

Many scholars have theoretically framed and called for teacher reflection (Ellison, 2008; Thomas, 1994; Wise, Spiegel, Bruning, 1999; Wold, 2003). However, there is a paucity of literature that empirically examines reflective practices of teachers, and even less that examines this practice in urban classrooms. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how I, as a second grade teacher in an urban school, use reflection to inform my pedagogical practice for African American students.

Significance of the Study

My study will add to the existing body of literature on reflection. There is a paucity of research that discusses how teachers in urban schools develop a pedagogy of reflection. Much of the research emphasizes conceptual and theoretical frameworks for reflection. However, my study would be one of the few studies that takes an empirical approach to studying reflection *on* action, as well as reflection *in* action. This study incorporates practical classroom experiences, contextual understanding, and an analysis of my subjectivities to inform my use of reflection. Furthermore, conducting this research in an urban school context will add to the existing body of literature on the urban school's response to technical rationalism.

Overview of the Study

In chapter one I presented the problem, the background information, research questions, the purpose, and significance of the study. In chapter two I examine the literature around my research study. I examine research on urban education, origins of reflection, conceptual frameworks for reflection, reflective learning theory, and reflection as pedagogy. Chapter three is

a discussion of autoethnography, setting of research, data generation, authenticity of research, ensuring quality, and ethics. In chapter four I present my data in the multiple genre forms of narrative writing, character portraits, journal entries, poetry, and photographed demonstrations of student work and other images relevant to this study. In chapter five, I provide a discussion in which I overview the study and my findings, as well as discuss implications, research significance, and future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review is to examine how reflection and reflective practice are addressed by theoretical and empirical literature. The two main sections of this review cover three bodies of literature: urban schools and technical rationalism (which are addressed together) and reflection as a response to technical rationalism. The first section examines the specific context of urban schools and how they have been affected by technical rationalism, and the origins and critiques of technical rationalism. The second section is divided into three subparts that address reflection as a response to technicism, reflective learning theory, and reflection as pedagogy.

Urban Education and Technical Rationalism

There is much research that explores urban education. This research practice is attentive to the urban school as the context for my reflective practice. An examination of urban schools as context is critical to my study, as my reflections are based on my considerations of myself as an urban teacher responding to students who live in urban communities and attend an urban school. An examination of context makes more transparent how elements such as cultures and histories

shape and effect the present experiences, attitudes, and behaviors of individuals in the given context. Thus, in my considerations of how my practice functions in an urban context, I must begin with an attempt to understand social, cultural, political, and economic factors that affect the individual lives of my students, as well as their communities. In order to understand the plight of urban schools today, it is necessary to briefly explore how economic and political systems have caused a decline in urban communities, thus adversely affecting urban schools.

Anyon (1995) concludes that as African Americans migrated from the rural South to urban areas from the 1930's through the 1960's, Caucasian Americans took flight to suburban areas in which there were no African Americans. Anyon contends that "White flight, the increasing ghettoization of blacks, and the deterioration of the city was fostered by federal policies that discriminated against blacks" (p. 62). The Great Depression, reliance on dwindling property taxes to support schooling, and economic and political inequities, yielded insufficient resources to urban centers experiencing large influxes of African Americans. Hence, African American children in these urban areas attended schools with inferior resources. The lack of these schools' responses to poverty and cultural differences has resulted in African American students' historical isolation from mainstream culture in America, and from its educational curriculum.

Anyon found that educational reform developers refused to consider poverty, dialects, and race; they were less concerned about the needs of the students and more concerned doing what was "acceptable in the larger bureaucratic system" constructed by "the old-boy network of white men" (p. 77). Kozol (1975) supports this belief with his premise that the goal of public schooling in America is "state indoctrination" of good citizens. In essence, school protects and promotes ruling beliefs and ideologies in order to maintain the status quo. Socialization takes

place that suppresses individual interests and backgrounds of African American students in urban schools and sets a paradigm for learning without delivering the social and economic resources required to attain this paradigm.

In many instances, urban schools are referred to as "inner city" schools (Anyon, 1995; Bainbridge, Lasley, & Sundre, 2003). I will use the term "urban" solely to refer to schools within metropolitan city limits, and in which at least 95% of their student populations are of African American or Latino descent and at least 75% of their student populations receive free or reduced lunch (Esposito, Davis, & Swain, 2011). This section discusses the plight of urban schools in America, and how legislation and educational institutions have responded to matters that affect urban schools. Although many urban schools experience varying states of tension, I do not make the hasty generalization that every school within city limits can be readily characterized as low-performing or high poverty (Freedman & Appleman, 2008), nor are these schools necessarily populated with at risk, disadvantaged, and troublesome students (Blake, Butler, Lewis, & Darensbourg, 2011; Means & Knapp, 1991; Shields, 2001). Nonetheless, it is not uncommon to find urban schools that are segregated by race, resource, and social economic status (Anyon, 1995; Taines, 2011). As a teacher that has served in a large urban district for thirteen years, I have first-hand experience with the challenges that frequently plague the urban educational climate. Research shows there are widespread cases in which urban school educators confront conditions that their suburban counterparts face less frequently: inadequate support from administrators and supervisors, excessive workload, lack of parental support, clerical burdens, inadequate support staff, insufficient resources and supplies, low salaries, and the challenges inherent in student overpopulation (Ng, 2003; Yonezawa, Jones, & Singer, 2011). Furthermore, much of the research on urban schools shows a link between academic achievement and the impoverishment

that is often found in urban communities (Bainbridge, Lasley, & Sundre, 2005; Raffo et al., 2009). According to Cooter and Cooter (2004), children of poverty-stricken communities may have greater risk for premature births, fetal alcohol or drug exposure, inadequate prenatal care, and undereducated parents or caregivers.

Students in America's urban schools are not showing significant academic progress. According to the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress, few urban districts made gains in reading and math, and standardized test score gaps between higher income and lower income students persist (http://nationsreportcard.gov/tuda.asp). Of the districts involved in the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA), only two states made gains in reading in the grade levels assessed from 2009-2011 (http://nationsreportcard.gov/reading_2011). The plight of urban schools suggests that there is a need for alternative pedagogies. Taines (2011) suggests that urban educators take a pedagogical stance that is reflective, investigative, and engages the students in dialogue that is relevant to the students' real life experiences. Means and Knapp (1991) found that when dialogue was the central medium for teaching and learning, cognition and reasoning improved among impoverished and disadvantaged students at risk of academic failure. The legislation of No Child Left Behind has resulted in the mandated implementation of school reform models that rely more on the teacher's ability to follow a scripted lesson than to engage with students (Esposito et al., 2012). These reform models are frequently implemented in schools that serve low-income, diverse communities, often comprised of African American and Latino students.

Reform models suppose that student achievement and results on national tests can be improved by the implementation of comprehensive school reform initiatives designed to restructure teacher practices with rigid prescriptions for classroom operations. These reform models further

the notion that teachers, particularly urban teachers in schools with low test scores, lack the qualifications, consciousness, and tenacity to improve student learning. Teachers in urban schools with scripted reform initiatives might feel "deprofessionalized" when they are expected to perform as mere technicists (Olsen & Sexton, 2009, p.18). Yonezawa, Jones, and Singer (2011) assert that while technical knowledge is critical for teaching practice, teachers must reach beyond technicism to build healthy relationships with students and confront elements of the social and professional context that contribute to a challenging classroom environment. According to Esposito et al. (2012), the adoption of school reform without regard for the school context can be "devastating to culturally and linguistically diverse students" (p. 238). Furthermore, research has indicated that urban practitioners who desire to integrate more culturally relevant pedagogy find that the standards and evaluation instruments of reform models privilege White hegemony and minimize the practitioners' abilities to provide instruction relevant for diverse student populations (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Although some reform models may include strategies and that could be useful in teaching, a teacher's sole delivery of scripted reform programs, particularly those that do not consider the cultures and backgrounds of students, may not be sufficient to meet the learning styles and needs of each student. Milanowski et al. (2009) found that a large percentage of new urban teachers are more enticed by curricular flexibility than salary incentives when considering contract renewal. Peck (2010) found that after teachers in an 80% low income and 89% African American urban school revised the curriculum and pedagogy to be student-centered and culturally relevant, student engagement and academic gains increased. In short, teachers took "ownership" of their practice and designed instruction around students' learning needs rather than passively falling following structures and practices that did not support or engage the specific needs and interests of their urban student populations (Peck, 2010, p. 400).

Sylvester (1994) is an example of an editor that took ownership of his instruction by modifying curriculum, thus challenging social structures from within his third grade urban classroom. Upon realizing the economic marginalization and effects of racial discrimination on African Americans and Latinos in Philadelphia, he engaged students in social and economic issues and motivated them to become their own change agents. He utilized the real-life experiences of his students – including violence, homelessness, and drug abuse – to provoke them to think about the power agents around them and to consider a broader range of possibilities than the limited options readily available. When Sylvester simulated a town in his classroom and allowed students to participate in the economic, social, and political issues of "Sweet Cakes Town," he employed critical pedagogy. His emphasis was not simply on the transformation of curriculum for student agency, engagement and learning, but also on challenging other urban educators to design lessons that do more than merely standardize and replicate learning without consideration of the students' lived contexts.

Another matter affecting urban education is that of teacher quality. The failing scores on national tests of students in urban schools has often been attributed to a lack of quality teaching. Both veteran and novice teachers have been scrutinized for their inability to improve the status of diverse student populations in urban schools. Teaching vacancies in high needs-urban schools are frequently filled with novice teachers who lack teaching experience, or "quality" (Milanowski, et. al, 2009). A key component of teacher quality, as stipulated in the legislation of No Child Left Behind, is "accountability," which is purportedly measured by how well a teacher can propel her students to perform on standardized tests, as well as how she adheres to the directives of technicism as they are outlined in legislation and reform initiatives. This notion of accounta-

bility can be juxtaposed with a more reflective characterization that "teacher accountability involves being more self-conscious, critical, and analytical of one's own teaching beliefs and behaviors" (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). The legislation of No Child Left Behind and subsequent trends in school reform have attempted to define and outline the criteria of quality teaching. This legislation suggests that policy makers contend the problems of urban education lie, to some degree, in the absence of "quality" teaching. In their proposed policy initiatives to improve urban schools, Bainbridge et al. (2003) call for increased monitoring of how teachers in urban climates set expectations, distribute grades, use data to make decisions, and prepare students for college entrance.

While teacher quality and accountability are scrutinized, researchers are not only concerned with faulty teaching, but also with how social, political, and economic challenges in communities affect the experiences that schools can offer to students (Taines, 2012; Nieto, 2000; Zeichner, 1995). Along these lines, Hoffman-Kipp, Artiles, and Lopez-Torres (2003) frame reflection as a social practice through which teachers confront issues of culture and social justice. Ng (2003) contends that traditional teacher education, while trying to operate in "colorblindness," produces practitioners that operate in misconceptions, stereotypes, and assumptions about populations with whom they have had no prior experiences and interactions. According to Freedman and Appleman (2008), the politicized characterization of quality teaching in urban schools is ultimately an issue of power and merits consideration of the sociocultural structures that determine identity and position. Rather, Freedman and Appleman (2008) extend the meaning of quality in the urban context to include the teacher's ability to mediate his commitment to social justice with the realities of the urban context in which he serves. Research shows that teachers who

have no prior experience with urban students cannot positively affect urban students without interrogating "their own positions and their students' positions around axes of race, class gender, and sexuality" (Freedman & Appleman, 2008, p. 113). This student-teacher disparity hinders relationship building, thus making it less likely that the teacher will provide culturally informed instruction designed to engage and mobilize urban students (Shandomo, 2010).

Because large populations of traditionally trained teachers are reluctant to confront the challenges of urban education, alternative training programs have become a popular method for responding to the "crisis in urban schools" (Pabon, Anderson, & Kharem, 2011). Alternatively trained teachers are expected to integrate their previous work experiences with teaching practices in order to provide students with more enriched learning opportunities. Regardless of background, training, and experience, Yonezawa et al. (2011) assert that successful teachers in urban schools have the "professional resiliency" (p. 917) that enables them to use adaptive processes to confront the adverse effects that violence, homelessness, poverty, overpopulation, and outdated school resources may have on their students. In this regard, teachers' resilience, as well as their willingness to take risks that may defy conventional modes of teaching, show their commitment to sociocultural awareness (Means & Knapp, 1991).

Another issue that confronts urban populations is the large number of students that show problematic behavior. Students who exhibit problematic behavior in urban settings are often suspended or sent to an isolated work place. According to Lassen, Steele, and Sailor (2006), challenging behavior is not exclusive to urban schools, but occurs more frequently in more severe forms in urban schools when compared to other types of schools. Adopting more culturally relevant practices of instruction and relationship building between students and teachers may result in decreased behavioral infractions (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Culturally relevant pedagogy is a

response to educational practices that privilege the dominant culture of the nation while marginalizing the racial and ethnic backgrounds of students who are not of the dominant culture. Mora (2011) found that teacher-directed emphasis on the skills needed to pass high stakes testing denied urban students engaging learning experiences, hence resulting in their boredom and disinterest. This boredom may result in undesired, problematic behavior. Therefore, the behavior, while problematic, is understood and critiqued as more of a rejection of curriculum and instruction that privileges the mainstream cultures of North America and Europe (Hale, 2001).

Programs and initiatives, such as Positive Behavior Support (Lassen et al., 2006) and Response to Intervention (Pavri, 2010), have been implemented in urban schools to provide behavior management techniques and interventions. Both programs support desired social and academic behaviors through comprehensive interventions, progress monitoring, and reinforcement. Nonetheless, some teachers are skeptical that behavioral interventions can work under in a climate of high stakes testing, as test preparation leaves little or no time and resources to implement behavioral modification plans (Pavri, 2010). As African American male students have significant behavioral referrals in urban schools, Pabon et al. (2011) contend that increasing the number of black African American male teachers who are able to provide culturally relevant practices in urban schools may foster increased self-esteem, more desirable behavior, and relevant academic support for those male students.

Shields (2001) explores music education, music performance, and mentoring as interventions for undesired behavior in a group of urban students. Students who openly admitted to having problems in behavior and attitude regarded music as a necessity that is “basic to life” (Shields, 2001, p. 281). A significant portion of the research participants showed varying degrees of improvement in self- perception and behavior as they became more vested in the mentoring

aspect of the study. Not only were students engaged in the music that they studied and performed, but they were supported and encouraged through their relationships with mentors. Although there are numerous programs and initiatives to foster improved student behavior in urban schools, some educational theorists contend that when students perceive themselves and their cultures to be misrepresented, marginalized, or ignored by their academic experiences, they may be more prone to rebel against the teachers, curriculum, and academic institutions which deny them agency (Hale, 2001; Ogbu & Simmons, 2008).

Transcending technicism's faulty considerations in public schools requires use of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson- Billings, 2009). I have found that the use of African American Vernacular English is an active ingredient in the interactions and communications that occur in my second grade classroom. All too often the use of AAVE among students is deemed a faulty practice that needs to be corrected by teachers. However, the use of AAVE is indicative of the resilience, strength, and interpretive abilities of African Americans who developed their own oral traditions in the midst of being enslaved and denied access to the dominant oral and literary traditions in America. Because aspects of Black language do not parallel oral traditions of America's mainstream, Black language in its evolution continues to be deemed faulty and violate. According to Heath (1989), "judgments about language use extend to evaluations of character, intelligence, and ways of thinking; thus, negative assessments of language abilities often underlie expressions of sweeping prejudicial characterizations of Black Americans, especially those living in poverty" (367). King (2015) asserts that a liberatory pedagogy committed to teaching for change would not only assist teachers with responding to the diversity and pluralism of classrooms, but would also challenge the dysconsciousness that renders them "uncritical and prepared

to question white norms, white superiority, and white privilege" (122). A disregard of the socialization, community and family structures, as well as historical traditions that have framed the African American experience promotes the shortsightedness that denigrates the purpose and use of AAVE, as well as its culture of origin. Repeated denial, punishment, or criticizing of the family and community language patterns of African American students impedes their abilities to adapt and transfer their literacy competencies in the acquisition of other linguistic structures, such as the formal standard American English most dominant in American schools and workplaces (Heath, 1989). My understanding and use of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is a key factor in my ability to provide culturally relevant instruction and build relationships with my urban students. AAVE, also known as Black English, Ebonics, or African American language, is a linguistic code, rooted in West African languages, and mostly used by African Americans (Delpit & Dowdy, 2002). As a novice teacher, I fell into the habit of constantly correcting and criticizing my students' use of English. However, I soon learned that my criticisms were potentially offensive to students and their families who relied on AAVE for daily communication. I realized that my misjudgments and mischaracterizations of my students' use English was a result of my operating according to a technicism that refutes pluralism.

My students' use of AAVE, is not only a reflection of their home lives and backgrounds, but also useful in helping me to design culturally relevant instructional practices that utilizes what they know to extend their learning. Therefore, I must consider how AAVE functions in both my practice and my reflective thinking. The practitioner that operates as a vessel of pure technicism may combat the use of language that does not fall within the realm of standard American English. I believe that stigmatizing and devaluing any language or dialect of a language is

an offense to its users and the history from which it emerges. Rather, such stigmatizing promotes the economic, power, and social structures that birth and promote a monolithic technical rationalism. According to Hilliard (2002) the language that many African Americans use "must be described in its historical and cultural context, and not as a simple contrast to common American English (p. 101). Through reflection I realized that my teacher education could cause me to undermine and forego my skillset in the knowledge, practice, and comprehension of AAVE. As this study requires me to observe the interactions and relations in my classroom, I realize that many of these interactions hinge upon my students' communicative abilities. Thus, I realized that a great portion of their communicative abilities rest in their command of AAVE. Hence, my ability to respond in ways meaningful to my students frequently rests in my command of AAVE and my sensitivity to how my students communicate orally and in writing. I experienced and continue to experience what Kohl (2002) deems a "topsy turvy" (p. 150). A topsy turvy is a jolting element that causes a teacher to transform her way of thinking about herself, learning how to analyze her presentation of herself, and developing constructions for how her students hear and interpret her (Kohl, 2002).

Integrating literary texts, such as *Shop Talk* by Juwanda G. Ford (2004), not only honors the experiences of many of my students, but it allows them to understand how their present knowledge base and command of AAVE as a home language might be used to extend their academic learning:

> In my neighborhood, my favorite place is the barbershop. We call it The Shop. Talking in the barbershop is different from talking anywhere else. If you just say 'Yo' everyone knows exactly what you mean. When I walk in on Saturday morning, all the barbers give me a shout out. That's how we say hello.

"What's going on Solomon?"

"Hey Shorty!"

"What's up?"

"Nothing much," I say.

I walk around The Shop and bump fists with all the guys

"You getting a cut?' my barber, Alton asks me.

Alton snaps a big cape around my shoulders. "So, what you been up to?" (p. 5-12)

The above excerpt, taken from *Shop Talk,* inspired an opportunity in which my second grade students and I were not only able to recount our own similar experiences in neighborhood salons and barbershops, but to analyze how the language of the text varied from other texts used in school. Students confidently demonstrated their understandings of the culture and content of the text, as well as their ability to translate words and phrases that did not follow the norms of standard American English. In this instance, students were not penalized for their command of AAVE. Rather, they were vindicated and celebrated for their abilities to interpret cultural and linguistic meaning. Moreover, we were able to use their background knowledge as a building tool for expanding their understanding of constructions of standard American English in practical and meaningful ways.

Furthermore, as I listened more critically to myself speak in and out of the classroom, I realized that I used AAVE just as often as my students did. AAVE is, in fact, an integral part of my home language. Whether it is the use of "finna," for "preparing to," "dat for "that," or "yo" for "your," I am, in fact, a proud user of the dialect. The only difference between my students' and my use of the dialect was that I was aware that I was moving back and forth between standard American English and AAVE. I was equipped to know when and how to code switch, while

my students were not yet equipped. Therefore, I needed to teach them how to code switch and the implications for using AAVE and American English. It became and continues to be my professional goal and ethical duty to provide my students with the "cultural competence" that enables them to "grow in understanding and respect for their culture of origin rather than experiencing the alienating effects of education where school based learning detaches students from their home culture" (Ladson-Billings, 2002, p. 111). Even through the use of literature, such as *Shop Talk*, my students and I demonstrated he cultural competence that allowed us to achieve our learning goal of studying dialogue in a fictional text, while situating our learning in a context of real life cultural experience. Furthermore, cultural competence enables students to critically navigate the distinct differences between school and home cultures without feeling that they must judge one as superior to the other. According to Ladson-Billings (2002), a teacher's systematic self-examination through reflective practice results in students' gaining cultural competence, academic achievement, and socio-political consciousness. Furthermore, reflection may bring about "linguistic sensitivity" (154) in which teachers think carefully before they speak, consciously listen to themselves, consider how students interpret what they say, and listen deliberately to students (Kohl, 2002).

Kohl asserts that (2002) knowledge and intellect cannot be measured according to the norms of testing. I agree with Kohl (2002) that the anxiety and marginalization that many students face in the school environment results in a "sensible revolt," an unwillingness to conform to "unreasonable authority" that denigrates their language, intellect, experiences, and backgrounds (p. 149). Hilliard (2002) contends mass produced standardized tests and teaching practices are biased, and thus invalid in their approaches to and assessment of African American stu-

dent learning. All too frequently, these reform efforts of standardization merely suggest that African American students are academically challenged and language deficient without having engaged in a careful inquiry of how language and culture fare in the assessment and instructional process (Hilliard, 2002).

The continued decline of urban schools suggests political mandates or large scale systemic changes have proven ineffective. Reform that standardizes learning and teaching, and curriculum based on high stakes testing measures fail to respond to diverse populations with diverse learning needs. Furthermore, many of these reform initiatives are based on what is considered to be data-based scientific study, which privileges investigating the strictly observable through quantitative inquiry. However, Baez and Boyles (2009) caution educational theorists and researchers against "science that cannot deal with philosophical, moral, or political kinds of questions" (p. 38). This kind of technical and empirical science provides the foundation for educational practices that are generalizable and easily replicated, finding inadequate anything that lies outside of its bounds. Teachers who serve urban populations may find reflective inquiry beneficial as they consider how their own subjectivities impact practice, as well as how and why gaps may exist between what is theoretically framed by technical rationalism and what actually occurs in an urban classroom experience.

Origins and Critiques of Technical Rationalism

Practices emerging out of technical rationalism have frequently been used to respond to many of the concerns about urban schools. Technical rationalism is a positivist theoretical perspective grounded in an objectivist epistemology based on "observable facts, empirical observation, and analytically sound propositions" (Schon, 1983, p. 32). The positivistic underpinnings of

technical rationalism insist that knowledge can only be derived from experimentation of observable phenomenon, thus denying the existence or factuality of ideas that are not obtained through objective science (Baez & Boyles, 2009). According to Schon (1983), technical rationality is perpetuated as a system of instructional approaches and behaviors that emerge from theories and techniques of basic and applied science. Ovens (2000) characterizes technical rationalism as distorted assumptions grounded in the "science dimension," (p. 178) which emphasize prescriptive procedures for reaching objectives and standards. Ovens (2000) also juxtaposes the trained technicist who applies formulas in a standard and simplified way with the reflective practitioner who is able to "interpret context, applying appropriate thought systems and understanding in creating wise judgment and action" (Ovens, 2000, p. 179) in complex and unpredicted situations. According to Baez and Boyles (2009), it is the science behind the technical rationalism that fosters teaching practices that are considered to be best for everyone, thus stratifying exceptionalities that lie outside of what has been "proven." Technical rationality requires researchers to provide scientific data that serves as the evidence for how practice should operate. In this regard, knowledge is constructed through utilization of theories and techniques that stem purely from scientific inquiry. However, reflective practice cannot be measured by technical rationality achieved solely by science-based theory. Hence, reflective practice may serve as a formidable response to the technicism that fails in urban education.

Schon is skeptical of technical rationality's devaluing of the knowledge attained through deliberate inquiry into the conflicts that arise in practice. He suggests that reflective exercise is a legitimate source of knowledge, revealing insights that may not be considered in purely quantitative approaches to developing theory for practice. Schon (1991) notes,

> The choice of technical rationality as an exclusive epistemology of practice leads to a dilemma of rigor or relevance. It forces us to choose between the rigor contained in technically rational analysis…and the relevance of inquiry into messy problematic situations of manifest importance.... When we take the reflective turn, we avoid this dilemma because we do not give priority to technical rationality as a privileged source of rigorous knowledge. (p. 10)

Valli (1992) is critical of technical rationalism's disregard for society's pluralism, and the complex and diverse problems this pluralism embodies. According to Brookfield (1995), any reliance on knowledges that predetermine problems and prescribe solutions to fit local contexts is distorted. Schon (1991) and Moon (2004) propose that reflective practice might propel a teacher to extend her thinking beyond a monolithic view of educating students that disregards context and the perspectives of others. For example, teachers who only disseminate official information in the traditional lecture or teacher-focused modality "reconfirm dominant views of identity, meaning, authority, and interaction" (Kincheloe & Hayes, 2007). In this regard, technical rationalism – which assumes a constant set of practices that work for all contexts and situations – restricts authentic classroom interactions and objectifies both teacher and student.

The complexities of schooling require much more than technical orientation and pedagogical understandings (Valli, 1992). Technical rationalism discredits the teacher's ability to operate beyond the prescriptions of curriculum and passive acceptance (Zeichner et al., 1996). Technicism relies on reciprocity: practitioners rely solely upon researchers to provide the science from which to develop techniques for diagnosing and solving problems, while researchers, operating outside of the practice context, rely upon practitioners to deliver problems for examination

(Schon, 1991). Such rationalism may alienate students whose backgrounds and realities are outliers or culturally incongruent with the scientific research used to develop and inform educational policies, curricula, and pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995b). A counter to this rationalism, reflection opens opportunities for the participant to consider alternate possibilities and realities, confront her own assumptions about accepted norms, as well as conduct inquiry that may have gone unconsidered by positivistic reasoning (Schon, 1983) and technicism (Brookfield, 1995; Greene, 1995; Schon, 1983).

After seven years of research, Leistyna (2007) concluded that reflective practice can be implemented to reduce the "risk of turning teachers into efficient multicultural technicians/distributors rather than creative and critically engaged public intellectuals" (p. 59). The teacher that relies on technical rationalism and ideals that standardize education for all students may not be equipped to sensitively and appropriately respond to classroom events that extend beyond a purely scientific knowledge base. Furthermore, the presence of diversities within the urban classroom may prove overwhelming as they are exceptions to the norms of standardization and technicism. This may prove problematic when classroom problems fall outside of the scope of the scientific research and theoretical frameworks upon which the teacher's practice may be predicated. Zeichner et al. (1996) contend that reflective teaching can be empowering for educators who reject the notion of the teacher as a "technician who merely carries out what others, removed from the classroom, want them to do, and a passive acceptance of top down reforms" (p. 199). Likewise, Ovens (2000) notes that the "determinism, predictability, and quantifiability" of rationalism must not inhibit the teacher's use of reflection and practice (p. 190). It is the "messiness" and bias of human judgment and human experience that serve as the rationalist's critique that reflection is insufficient for the extraction of "rational knowledge" (Jordi, 2011, p. 182).

However, the goal of reflection is not to nullify theory and technical rationalism altogether, but to provide an alternate practice for understanding and responding to the exceptionalities and outliers that arise in practice, but are not considered or prescribed as rational enough for technicism.

Reflection as Response to Technicism

The notion of using reflection to explore education and teacher practice has been considered for many years (Dewey, 1933; Loughran, 2002; Richert, 1990). Numerous theorists, in one way or another, have used Dewey's work as a springboard for their analysis of reflection (Dimova & Loughran, 2009; Reynolds, 2011; Schon, 1983; Tsangaridou & Siendentop, 1995). While some researchers have called for increased structure in approaches to reflection (Luttenberg & Bergen, 2008; Schon, 1983), framing structure for reflection is difficult when theorists are inconclusive about its purpose (Attard, 2008; Brookfield, 1987; Calderhead, 1987; Fazio, 2009; Kraft, 2002; Marcos, Miguel, & Tilema, 2009; Russell & Korthagen, 1995; Tomkins, 2009; Schon, 1983; Wold, 2003). The descriptions and characterizations of reflection are widespread and may never reach a point of unanimity or universality because of the varying differences in motives, backgrounds, and beliefs about practice, learning, and schooling (Feiman-Nemser, 1990; Reynolds, 2011; Zeichner et al., 1996). Moreover, the internal activity and subjectiveness of reflection are guided by varying motives and purposes (Attard, 2008; Boody, 2008; Zeichner et al., 1996). while theorists often agree that reflection is a tool of mediating tensions, they differ on the extremities and purposes for mediation (Boody 2008; Valli, 1992; Zeichner, 1995). Furthermore, while some theorists contend that reflection should be used for sense making and understanding (Attard, 2008; Reynolds, 2011; Schon, 1983), others present reflection as the precursor to taking direct and immediate action in a situation (Fazio, 2009; Reynolds, 2011). As it relates to venue, theorists and researchers are inconclusive as to whether reflection is

best as an individual or group activity (Dewey, 1933; Schon, 1987; Hoffman-Kipp et al., 2003). The lack of unification in the study of reflection is further evident through the use of widespread names and references that have been used both interchangeably and distinctively: "critical reflection" (Brookfield, 1987); "reflective teaching" (Zeichner et al., 1996); "teacher's thinking" (Calderhead, 1987); "action research" (Zeichner et al., 1996); "reflective inquiry" (Schon, 1984); "reflective practice" (Schon, 1984); "reflexivity" (Goodall, 2008); "reflective activity" (Dewey, 1933); "transformative learning" (Mezirow, 1991); "reflective learning (Tomkins, 2009); and "self-study" (Drevdahl, Stackman, Purdy, & Louie 2002). The purposes, objectives, and interpretations of reflections are so multifarious that a practitioner may have difficulty adopting any one proposal or typology of reflection. Despite its widespread characterizations and conceptualizations, a consistent theme among researchers and theorists in fields of education is that reflection requires in-depth consideration, inquiry, and scrutiny of the experiences of one's professional practice. Another unifying theme is that reflection can be used to draw conclusions about practice. In this literature review, I use the term reflection to refer to the deliberative thinking and considerations given to experiences. I will use reflective practice and reflective pedagogy to discuss how processes of reflection are used in teaching practice.

My purpose for this research is not to declare a theory for reflection, but to consider, and in some cases, apply what theorists have contended about reflection and to assess how those ideas play out as I explore my research questions. I expected that I would gain insights from my experiences that would enable me to contribute to the development of theory for reflection. As I considered reflecting for theory, I was most concerned with how reflection operates in practice and how it directly impacts students. While many of the theorists on reflection are White American men whose lenses are distinct from my lens, I was interested in how my reflections worked

within the spectrum of my subjectivities, and how my interpretations of what I experienced might impact my teaching practice. According to Collins (2000), "because elite White men control Western structures of knowledge-validation, their themes pervade the interests paradigms and epistemologies of traditional scholarship." (p. 251). In turn, the knowledge claims, thoughts, and actions of less dominant groups are scrutinized against this paradigm and often suppressed. I agree with Code (1993), Collins (1996), and Alcoff (2001): thinking and knowledge claims represent the standpoints, interests, and social positions of the one constructing interpretations of the world around her. Because of this, I believe that any attempt to develop a theory of reflective practice should include an analysis of how identity might function in the reflective process.

> The interpretive process is both individual and social; the effort to establish meaning is performed by the individual, and subject to modification upon her critical reflectiveness, but it is always also conditioned by the concepts, narratives, values, and meanings that are available in her social and discursive context. (Alcoff, 2001, p. 73)

My reflecting for practice does not lie outside the boundaries of reflecting for theory, as theory and practice inform each other. Reflective theory should not exclude the consideration of the reflective practitioner's subjectivities and how these subjectivities may impact their interpretations of the context in which they practice. Lupinski, Jenkins, Beard, and Jones (2012) assert that through reflection, professionals develop "context specific theories" (p. 81) that transform teaching and learning. While I consider reflection as theory, I am careful not to subscribe a proceduralization for reflection that merely reinscribes the technicism that I am critiquing. As much of the literature on reflection deals with its transformative nature, or its ability to incite change in practice and action, one should consider the connection between reflection and action in theory

development. Tan (2008) conducted a study done in Singapore, which indicated the possible tensions between reflection and technical rationalism. While the Singaporean Ministry of Education sought to promote reflection for teachers, it advocated and implemented an explicit and systematic form of reflection "with an accent on technical rationality," or quantitative outcomes (p. 229). Teachers in this initiative were not encouraged to extend their reflections beyond the immediate classroom to consider broader contextual matters that affect student performance. According to Tan (2008) the view of reflection that is "explicit and systematic, focusing on specific and proximate matters within the academic and social efficiency tradition, is insufficient to enable and empower teachers in Singapore to move from mere implementers to creators of new knowledge and practices" (p. 231). In Tan's study, technical rationalism guided the identification of problems and the problem solving process, but its scope of reflection was limited to student achievement, classroom pedagogy, and teaching duties. This approach ignores how factors outside of the classroom may be operating within the classroom, which may cause the misinterpretation of problems and misidentification of problem solving processes. My view of reflection as theory understands the reflective practitioner as a theorist, researcher, and practitioner who considers how context, teacher identity, student identity, pedagogy, and technicism operate in reflection and are made manifest in practice. Thus, the cultures, backgrounds, experiences, attitudes, and standpoints that the reflective practitioner brings to the reflective process are equally as noteworthy as the object of reflection when considering the development of theory for reflection.

Conceptual Models and Frameworks for Reflection

My examination of reflection is most influenced by four educational philosophers and theorists. Dewey (1933, 1938) was a pioneer in the study of reflection. He allows me to reflect upon experiences in order to develop understanding and construct knowledge. Brookfield (1987,

1995) challenges me to consider how subjectivities give way to assumptions that may be impacting practice. Feiman-Nemser (1990) provides various orientations for analyzing interpretations of reflections. Lastly, Schon (1983, 1991, 1994) provokes me to the very deliberate efforts of reflecting on practice, as well as reflecting in practice. Dewey (1933), a pioneer in the study of reflection in education, contends that reflection does not bind the practitioner with absolutes, but allows him to confront each situation with thoughtfulness about how non-evident elements of the environment affect present experience. Dewey (1933) defines reflection as "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (p. 9). He contends that reflection is a conscious meaning-making process that requires strict thinking. For Dewey, confronting a conflicting experience is provocation for reflection. The literature on reflection practice emphasizes the significance of reflection as deliberation on conflict (Edwards, 1994; Johnsen, Pacht, van Slyck, & Tsao, 2009; Lee, 2008). According to Dewey (1938),

> An experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment, whether the latter consists of persons with whom he is talking about some topic or event, the subject talked about…or the materials of an experiment he is performing. (p. 44)

Furthermore, Dewey (1933) is critical of predetermined, mechanical formulaic thinking, which disregards context, experience, and "the personal mental movement of the individual" (p. 81).

This framing of reflective deliberation begins by recasting a perplexing situation into a problem solving task. The reflective practitioner then forms a hypothesis and, after experimentation, either verifies or modifies it. Post-experiment reflection enables the practitioner to draw

conclusions and plan for continued exploration. Dewey's framework is appealing because it enables me to use my experiences with students to construct knowledge and gain understandings that are relevant for my immediate practice in its immediate context.

While Dewey provides a frame for me to use real life experiences and problems in the construction of knowledge, Brookfield helps guide my understanding of how assumptions and subjectivities might impact reflection. In his analysis of reflective thinking, Brookfield (1995) contends that when educators situate reflections in moral and political values based on justice and equity, their practice becomes more compassionate and democratic. This type of reflection involves a commitment to confronting assumptions, rethinking positions, and potentially modifying those positions. Nonetheless, Brookfield (1995) asserts that we all have "non-negotiables, instances in which we are not willing to compromise or agendas that we refuse to abandon, regardless of the criticism that we receive" (p. 117). These non-negotiables often become the basis of our subjectivities.

According to Brookfield, reflective practitioners ask themselves why they behave in a certain way, or question the appropriateness of a specific technique or organizational structure in a particular context. They critique the merits of technical rationalism based on their understanding of the dynamics of that context. In their reflections, practitioners ask questions that may challenge existing and acceptable assumptions and structures, and are skeptical of ideas portrayed as norms. They are inspired by their own experiences and interactions to consider ideas and scenarios that are not presented by others. Brookfield (1987) asserts,

> When we think critically we become aware of the diversity of values, behaviors, social structures, and artistic forms in the world. Through realizing this diversity, our commit-

> ments to our own values, actions, and social structures are informed by a sense of humility; we gain an awareness that others in the world have the same sense of certainty we do – but about ideas, values, and actions that are completely contrary to our own. (p. 5)

Brookfield's work is relevant because he calls for a reflective practice that delves into the origins and impacts of assumptions. He contends that a practitioner's assumptions are framed by and frame who she is and how she acts and responds in the classroom. As a result, what she considers as common sense may be ignored in reflection because of its unquestioned validity in the practitioner's world. These unexamined aspects of an educator's practice often become the hallmarks of non-democratic classrooms, places where student perspectives go unconsidered and their voices go unheard. In short, our assumptions are linked to our subjectivities and identities, and if the assumptive nature is not considered in a reflective way – through an examination of self-identities – the classroom may be dominated by the teacher's "unchallengeable omniscience" (Brookfield, 1995, p. 257). To avoid this, Brookfield calls for reflective inquiry that interrogates assumptions that undergird hegemonic practices and norms.

The process of reflective thinking does not produce a static outcome, but an ongoing exercise that it is fueled by both positive and negative stimuli. These stimuli promote thinking that causes the practitioner to question her personal assumptions as well as socially accepted assumptions and traditions. Through reflection, the practitioner becomes aware of the connections and tensions between her personal life and beliefs and the prevailing culture of the social institutions in which her life is situated, including her practice site (Brookfield, 1987, 1995). Furthermore, she may use reflection to reexamine and modify the values and common sense views that undergird her beliefs and how they function in practice.

While Brookfield and Feiman-Nemser both emphasize reflection as an instrument for teacher learning, Feiman-Nemser provides categorical orientations through which I can interpret my reflections. According to Feiman-Nemser (2012), the practitioner's reflective "mind activity" is influenced by background, teacher preparation, teaching philosophies, perceptions of school context, and presumptions about problems (p. 277). Furthermore, multiple orientations are needed because of the plurality and complexity of human experiences and motives. She asserts that reflection is relative to a teacher's "professional disposition" (Feiman-Nemser, 2012, p. 221). These orientations emerge from one's view and goals for teaching. The practitioner's preferred orientation becomes evident through particular actions, responses, and practices. Feiman-Nemser (1990) outlines five conceptual orientations that may guide one's reflective practice: the academic orientation, the practical orientation, the technological orientation, the personal orientation, and the social/critical orientation. Each of these orientations has implications for my research in reflective practice. The academic orientation, later coined the academic tradition (Zeichner, 1992) focuses on the transmission of subject matter and the development of understanding. In this orientation, the teacher's focus and reflective consideration is on how she delivers content and how well she fosters students' understanding of that content through factual, conceptual, procedural, and pedagogical elements of that field.

The practical orientation, reminiscent of Zeichner's (1992) developmentalist tradition, is concerned with the artistry that emanates from the experiences of teaching and developed as a response to uncertain and unscripted spaces that arise in classrooms. This orientation aligns with Schon's (1983) discussion of the tacit knowledge comes from the practical experiences of inter-

acting with students repeatedly. In practical orientation reflections, the teacher considers and interprets situations on a case-by-case basis, while "drawing on a repertoire of images, theories, and actions to construct an appropriate response" (Feiman-Nemser, 2012, p. 222).

The technological orientation focuses on the skills of teaching. In this area of reflection, the practitioner would consider how proficiently she carries out what she has been trained to do. Teachers are inclined to reflect upon their practice on a scientific measure of competence and performance. Through the lens of procedural knowledge implementation, teachers scrutinize themselves on the basis of their technicism. Furthermore, teacher actions and reflections center on achieving specific goals and using predetermined strategies to solve problems. This orientation often relies on a coach who can help the practitioner to identify and improve their erroneous techniques and competencies.

The personal orientation focuses on "learning to understand, develop, and use oneself effectively" (Feiman-Nemser, 2012, p. 225). Teachers may derive meaning from reflecting on how they take risks, facilitate a climate for learning, develop student-teacher relationships, and balance between teaching style and personal values. The personal orientation emphasizes "personal meaning and appreciates the interconnections of thinking and feeling" (p. 225). The critical/social orientation allows the teacher to critique schooling through a social vision. In this manner, a teacher's instructional practice and reflective practice consider the role of schooling in enlarging democracy and justice in the larger society. The teacher's reflections most frequently focus on his role as a community and political activist. Moreover, the practitioner is apt to consider how he empowers students to "find their voice and develop their identity" in the classroom as well as in the community (Feiman-Nemser, 2012, p. 226).

Schon's (1983) model for reflection, greatly influenced by Dewey, is based on how the practitioner frames the problems she encounters in the classroom. Schon's (1983) framework has significant implications for the data collection process of this research. He discusses the indeterminate zones of practice in which problems and complexities of practices cannot be predicted or prescribed through technical knowledge. By not separating 'reflecting' and 'doing,' Schon (1983) empowers practitioners with immediate response systems that emerge out of their professional knowing or tacit knowledge:

> Doing and thinking are complementary. Doing extends thinking in the tests, moves and probes of experimental action, and reflection feeds on doing as its results. Each feeds the other, and each sets boundaries for the others. It is the surprising result of action that triggers reflection. (p. 280)

Reflective practice emerges out of a teacher's willingness to reflect not only *on* practice or *for* practice, but *in* practice. Depending on backgrounds, past experiences, political and economic interests, and organizational roles, practitioners frame and interpret problematic situations differently (Schon, 1987). Accordingly, the problems of practice do not emerge as well-formed structures, but rather as "messy, indeterminate situations" that individuals framed differently based on their backgrounds, interests, and roles (p. 4). Much of Schon's attention is devoted to exploring how reflection can develop the type of practice that helps the practitioner respond to those exceptional zones that defy technical rationalist practice. Through systematized reflection, the practitioner/researcher will "observe, describe, and try to illuminate the things practitioners actually say and do, by exploring the understandings revealed by the patterns of spontaneous activity that make up their practice" (Schon, 1991, p. 4). Schon presents the concepts of reflecting on action and reflecting in action. The former takes a retrospective consideration of events and

responses that have already occurred in practice, while the latter calls for the simultaneous execution of practicing, knowing, reflecting, and acting. According to Schon, the frameworks are used to guide observations, descriptions, or analysis of what practitioners already know or how they already learn in the context of their own practice. Schon (1991) contends that researchers must become "practitioners who reflect in and on their inquiry and draw on their reflections to design educational experiences for others" (p. 8).

Schon (1991) frames reflection around four central themes: context for reflection, observing and reflecting, rigor of reflection (which is inclusive of validity and utility), and implications of reflection for the researcher/practitioner. The possibilities for observation and reflection includes media, symbols, procedures, stories, models, patterning, as well as strategies for representations and descriptions. While personal subjectivities are considerations for reflective practice, Schon (1991) contends that reflecting on the "truth" of one's isolated story is not plausible or utilitarian enough for practitioners. Rather, the goal of reflective inquiry is to make the study of practice useful to practitioners. Hence, the source of validity lies not in statistics or laws, but "in the extent to which practitioners who reflect are able to use [reflections] to design effective interventions, confirm action-oriented hypothesis," and "gain new insights into the phenomena of practice" (Schon, 1991, p. 28). After the researcher has relayed her account of a particular experience, her reflections should show the underlying rationale for why some features of the account are emphasized and others are ignored, as well as how she situates the account in certain categories. Schon (1991) is most concerned that stories that emerge from reflective practice not exist in isolation, but that they be constructed as "families of studies" and analyzed in a broader sense to understand their implications for both policy development and practice (p. 358).

Reflective practitioners, Schon contends, do not mimic what they have observed or simply transfer knowledge derived from another context. Rather, they construct new patterns, behaviors, and practices specific to their own settings. Schon's views of reflection on experience and reflection in an immediate experience can be juxtaposed with theories of reflection which focus more on looking back at a far-removed experience or situation (Horwood, 1995). Schon's tenets of reflection on action and reflection in action have been most appropriate for my research, because they allow me to consider not only what has happened, but what is happening in the current moment, as well as how these happenings do or do not relate to each other, to the immediate learning context, and to the larger social context.

Reflective Learning Theory

Each of the aforementioned theorists offers critical insights for how I might develop a pedagogy of reflection. Similarly, each individual stipulates that reflective practice requires, to some degree, that the practitioner assume the role of learner, gaining insights and constructing meaning from that which is experienced and observed in the immediate context of her classroom. Thus, practice becomes responsive to that which is learned in reflection.

Dewey (1938) notes that learning cannot occur if the one who is learning does not engage in meaningful thought about experience. Schon (1994) later stipulates that reflection results in usable learning that can be used to inform practice:

> Various kinds of reflection result in the production of usable and unusable knowledge. Individuals are more likely to contribute to the pragmatic resolution of the controversies in which they are entangled, if they learn how to better conduct their inquiry…. Human

> beings are capable of exploring how their own actions may exacerbate contention, contribute to stalemate, and trigger extreme pendulum swings, or, on the contrary, how their actions might help to resolve the conflicts that underlie disputes. (pp. 37- 38)

Both Dewey and Schon have contributed to the development of reflective learning theory. Reflective learning theory is applicable to my research, because, through reflections, I assume the role of learner in pursuit of the meaning and understanding of the experiences and engagements of my immediate practice. Emerging out of the constructivist fields, reflective process is a component of numerous frameworks for adult learning (Mezirow, 1990; Kolb et al., 2001; Tisdell, 2008). Nonetheless, reflective learning is gaining recognition as a learning theory on its own. Reflective learning theory has developed upon the idea that "reflection offers a way of helping individuals to help themselves as learners of practice in their individual workplace settings" (Dimova & Loughran, 2009). Mezirow (1991) and Berliner (1987) present reflective learning as transformational learning in which change is the objective and outcome of the learning experience. McAteer and Dewhurst (2010) discuss the "obligation to change" (p. 39) when the reflective learning exercise reveals faulty and inadequate practice. Castelli (2011) builds upon Mezirow's work by developing an integrated model of reflective learning which outlines five major elements: openness, awareness, reflecting for meaning, challenging beliefs, and ongoing dialogue. She asserts that practitioners should "find meaning in the learning experience by standing back to analyze and synthesize the learning experiences that have taken place both inside and outside of the classroom and to see how such learning experiences…translate into future actions" (Castelli, 2011, p.22). Castelli contends that reflecting on one's own behavior and considering alternate ways of responding and acting increases the likelihood for change and progress.

I use reflective learning theory as a framework for this research because I believe that teaching is a continuous process of learning (Ovens, 2000; Wold, 2003). As teachers are adult learners, their reflections allow them to gain insights by exploring their own motivations, choices, emotions, and interactions (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). As reflective learning hinges upon engagement in a noticeable experience that becomes embedded within the practitioner, what the reflective participant learns depends on what she notices (Moon, 2004). This taking account becomes the impetus of deliberative activity. Additional research on reflective learning found that decision making in practice should be informed by the learning, which emerges through reflective self-study (Attard, 2008), as well as through confronting assumptions (Brookfield, 1987).

Other reflective learning theorists highlight context as a critical element for reflective learning. Every triggering event and experience has a context (Brookfield, 1987). Zeichner (1995) suggests an examination of the classroom context as the critical domain, for helping "teachers enter into reflection about the social and political dimensions of their teaching" (p. 18). Cole and Knowles (1995) contend that, "critical reflection considers the institutional and social contexts of one's personal histories and how contextual elements influence professional socialization and career development" (p.140). Dewey (1933) characterizes context as the parameters of the encounter's immediate space and how that space is enacted upon by the relationships and interactions of the involved parties.

Normalcy is often shaped by context (Brookfield, 1987). In this regard, reflective learning theory allows me to consider how context and changes in context may impact my learning. Gay and Kirkland (2003) found that not only should there be contextual awareness in practice,

but also in reflection. I believe that instructional content, learning goals, student and teacher histories, teacher practices, and school visions are elements that contribute to the classroom context. Although context can be defined in a broader sense by the policies and requirements of the educational system, it is most immediately defined by the type of classroom structure explored by the teacher, as well as the relationships between the teacher and her students.

The reflective learner seeks to develop an understanding of how she thinks and constructs meaning while considering the role of context. Thus, reflective learning allows the teacher to consider the impact of context on the classroom encounter. Brookfield (1987) contends that critical thinkers are aware that normalcy is often shaped by context, while Gay and Kirkland (2003) assert that not only should there be contextual awareness in practice, but also in reflection. Subject content, learning goals, student histories, teacher practices, and school routines are elements for classroom context. For the purpose of this study, context not only refers to my urban classroom as physical space, but also the demographic, thematic, and conceptual spaces that feed into my reflective learning. While reflection on context may include an analysis of the physical setting and socio-cultural space of experience, for me, reflection on context also considers the ways that activities and circumstances within the space affect the experience, agitate conflict, support the reflective process, and support or refute perpetuated assumptions.

According to Horwood (1995), reflective learning requires a deliberate and meditative "bending back," a scanning of past experiences and seeking out of discrepancies (p. 227). Moon (2004) and Jordi (2011) are both less concerned with learning from the past, however, and more committed to considering the roles of emotion, human sensitivity and responsiveness in our attempts to make meaning. Emotions become more evident in reflective learning when issues of ethics, values, morality, and spirituality surface through reflective exercise.

According to Drevdahl et al. (2002), reflective study enables the practitioner to gain knowledge about how to improve teaching practice. Dewey (1933), a pioneer in reflection, contends that reflective learning is motivated by some experience of dissonance which calls the learner to reflect on the experience in order to understand the factors that contributed to the dissonance, and to mediate a solution. Likewise, Jordi (2011), while claiming that reflection should be an engagement with dissonance in experience, asserts that reflection is less about using a rational analytic process to gain meaning from experience, and more of a questioning of the elements of consciousness that cause the practitioner to translate the experience as problematic and dissonant. Varying degrees and types of learning result from reflective practice that critiques personal assumptions and biases as well as the "prejudices of rationalism" (Jordi, 2011, p. 182). This type of reflection creates opportunities for the participant to consider alternate possibilities and realities that were masked by his previously unquestioning acceptance of positivistic reasoning and technical rationalism.

According to Gay and Kirkland (2003) authentic reflection requires self-analysis and critical consciousness that is used to assess biases, construct and deliver lessons, critique hegemonic traditions in schools, and mediate learning climates that are relevant and responsive to diverse learners. Although there are numerous theoretical applications of reflective learning, the literature shows that experience and context are recurring components of reflective learning frameworks. Tomkins (2009) conducted research on how professionals might use storytelling of experience as a technique for reflective learning in order to improve their own career practice. In this research project, each participant identified a bewildering experience in the context of the workplace that was both professionally and personally relevant. Mentors guided the meaning-making stage of the reflective inquiry, so that the participants were encouraged to challenge their own

assumptions, as well as to "consider new and deeper perspectives on the situations presented" (Tomkins, 2009, p. 127). Participants engaged reflective learning through communicating the complexities of their realities, strengths, weaknesses, and sensitivities while organizing their reflections for storytelling.

Ryan, Amorim, and Kusch (2010) argue that reflective exercise helps the participant understand how she makes sense of the world, as well as how to use these findings to translate and transform ideas of self, community and practice. Accordingly, reflective learning emerges out of the participant's ability to mediate inter-relationships between ideas and their meanings, as well as individuals involved in the experience. Furthermore, reflective processes are responsive to the impact of time, space, and conversations therein. As a result, "learning becomes transformation, a process of negotiation of meaning that has impact on what the people say and on their systems of thought" (Ryan et al. p., 129). Reflective learning occurs when the learner assumes the role of researcher to work within the self to understand how he was affected by the encounter, as well as how his actions affected others in the encounter.

Reflection researchers and theorists, while varying in their beliefs about motive and process of reflection, maintain that understanding and interpreting experience within context and encounter are essential for transformation, challenging of assumptions, and negotiating problematic events (Brookfield, 1987; Mezirow, 1991; Schon, 1983). Jordi (2011) further asserts that rational reflection that magnifies content and cognition over human interaction, imaginations, context, and emotions disavows human experience and learning. Reflection enables the learner to bring her own experiences, interpretations, and consciousness into meaning construction, rather than simply relying on cognitive recall and narrow analysis.

Reflective learning is not about obtaining a pre-determined learning outcome, but is instead focused on the process of reflection, how the reflection emerges, and how the reflection enacts itself in the context to promote transformation. Furthermore, the reflective learner utilizes the constructivist approach to achieve learning by sorting the multi-layered intermingling of past experiences, personal preferences and purposes, rational and irrational assumptions, and subject matter requirements (Henderson, 1996). Hence, an examination of assumptions is critical to the learning process of reflective thinking (Brookfield, 1987). If reflective thinking is about mediating conflict, reconciling distortions, finding meaning, and achieving equity and justice in education, the practitioner can use reflective learning to acknowledge the role that assumptions have in creating these problematic spaces. Brookfield (1987) explains that critical thinking involves identifying and challenging the validity of assumptions when he notes that "identifying assumptions requires reflecting on why we habitually behave in certain ways or wondering about what motivates others, or wondering about what criteria informs the choices of another" (p.16). Thus, reflective learning supports the practitioner's consideration of how her own assumptions about herself, her students, and the profession operate within the context of practice. For me, a key goal of critical reflection is about achieving levels of understanding that enable me to create a more democratic, sensitive, and relative practice. Attitudes and behaviors that are directed by assumptions can be erroneous because they do not necessarily address real individuals or experiences. Although some assumptions have aspects of validity and accuracy, the critically reflective practitioner takes time to understand and evaluate the evidence and historical considerations upon which these assumptions are constructed (Dewey, 1933).

Reflection as Pedagogy

Reflection finds its way in education as a pedagogical instrument because of its potential value in impacting practice (Dimova & Loughran, 2009). Reflection as a pedagogy emerged as a response to complexities of teaching that cannot be addressed through mere technicism (Schon, 1983). Teachers make decisions daily about situations that arise in practice that are a result of many complex factors, such as student diversity and demographics, context of practice, and implementation of curriculum. Because teaching requires more than technical application, reflection can be a process for strategic and informed decision-making, as influenced by the teacher's thoughtfulness about context, student backgrounds, personal subjectivities, as well as professional motives and goals (Wold, 2003).

Dogani (2008) and Esquith (2007) contend that as a teacher considers context, he will gain understanding of how context affects his practice and determine to what degree, if any, practice should be altered due to context and student backgrounds. This contextualizing of learning allows practitioners to consider all elements – political, historical, social, cultural, spiritual, and economic – that contribute to the human interactions involved in the occurrence. Wold (2003) details a two-year study that examined the reflective exercises and reflective learning of urban teachers who worked with high-poverty African American or Hispanic students. The study observed how teachers use reflection to advance their own practice and to develop more appropriate instruction based on perceived student needs. This study also mirrored Dogani's (2008) findings that interpretations of the reflections were predominantly affected by classroom context. Foss (2010) shows that teachers who act on their reflections in very concrete and specific ways provide relevant pedagogical modifications that may be due to emotion or value concerns.

Walker-Dalhouse, Risko, Lathrop, and Porter (2010) examined teacher reflective practice that attempted to use cultural responsiveness and sensitivity to identify and develop responses to problematic experiences. Gay and Kirkland (2003) contend that the type of reflection needed to respond to cultural and racial issues in education requires teachers to "carefully examine their feelings about what they experience; and to work diligently at translating the knowledge they are learning into instructional possibilities for use with the students they will teach" (p. 184). This analysis of one's practice advocates for a reflective pedagogy that is responsive to contextual experience.

Unlike much of the research that emphasizes reflection on problems and complexities in teaching, Richert (1990) asked teachers to reflect on any aspect of practice they desired. She was more concerned with the actual process, depth, and structure of the reflective practice than the content of the reflections. As a pedagogical process, she found that teachers were less apt to use a reflective learning process due to a lack of structured opportunity, lack of time, and fear of judgment and evaluation. However, two decades later, Foss (2010) found that a systematic approach to reflective practice revealed gaps between teacher beliefs and practices, teacher conceptions of how students learn, teacher conceptions on content, and expectations of reform initiatives. Through a consistent use of reflective journals, teachers became aware of aspects of their own teaching, and frequently created and implemented alternative methods for practice.

While learning and meaning-making are both purposes and byproducts of reflection, the literature is inconclusive about how this learning should be used and implemented in developing a pedagogy of reflection (Birmingham, 2004; Boody, 2008; Dimova & Loughran, 2009; Hoffman-Kipp et al., 2003; Wold, 2003). Much of the literature suggests that teachers acted most im-

mediately and diligently on reflections guided by probing questions, peer collaborations, reflective coaches, and value and beliefs (Foss, 2010; Lee, 2010; Maloney & Konza, 2011; Richert, 1990; Stover, Kissel, Haag, & Shoniker, 2011; Wold, 2003). Marcos et al. (2009) contend that while there is much attention given to conceptual frameworks of reflection grounded in "self-created knowledge," the "explicit empirically based" research on reflection is infrequent and offers little information to help teachers enact a pedagogy of reflective practice (p. 201).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Autoethnography

The purpose of this study is to understand my reflective self and how those reflections impact my pedagogical practice. As a study of self in relation with others, the methodology of autoethnography best addresses my research questions. My discussion of autoethnography will present: 1.) definitions and interpretations of autoethnography by researchers in the field; 2.) criticisms of autoethnography; 3.) the relevance of autoethnography; and 4.) the context for my autoethnography.

Definitions and Interpretations

The sharing of a story or experience entails looking back or reflecting on previous encounters and activities. I believe that reflection is a deeply internal activity that can be represented though the use of "personal, expressive language" that conveys the thinker's connection to the lived experience (Mlynarczyk, 2006, p.4). In order to examine how I implemented the conscious and deliberative process of reflection, I needed to utilize a research methodology that allowed me to write introspectively, an important viewpoint as my experiences and concerns in practice were the objects of my inquiry (Ellis, 1997; Schon, 1983). Autoethnography enabled me to respond to technical rationalism because I could use my story to "question what surrounds me restricted by neither technological views, nor philosophical views" (Greene, 1973, p. 9).

Not only did autoethnography allow me to discuss how I use reflection, but it also helped me examine how these reflections were influenced by and expressions of personal subjectivities as well as the society and culture around me. In short, I employed autoethnography in this re-

search project because it is a methodology of and for reflection. Moreover, this methodology permitted me to explore how I confront the expectations of technical rationalism in order to perform as a reflective practitioner who is sensitive and responsive to the experiences that emerge out of human encounters in my immediate classroom context.

Denzin (1989) asserts that autoethnography is personal narrative that evokes emotional responses to emblematic experiences through reflective processes, and his assertion helped me to reconcile my subjectivities with my inquiries into reflective practice. At the onset of doctoral matriculation, I felt disconnected from the technical and objective language of the academy, which seemed to leave little room for emotion, human experience, and subjective involvement with research. Interested in how my subjectivities operate in my professional practice, as well as in my reflections, I was relieved to learn about qualitative research, specifically autoethnography, which requires human sensitivity and responsiveness throughout the inquiry process. Inspired by Ellis and Bochner (2000), I decided to discuss how my reflective practice is a process based on self "inquiry," influenced by "multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" (Schon, 1984, p. 739), requiring me to look both inward and outward to examine the relationships between socio- cultural elements and personal experience (Neumann, 1996).

Autoethnography was the most viable methodology to carry out a self-study in that it combines autobiographical and narrative writing to analyze how identity is constructed through sociocultural processes and how these processes affect my reflective practice (Vasconcelos, 2011; Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001; Neumann, 1992). As the construction of this autoethnography required my reflective participation, it did not require me to present myself as a static, unmalleable individual. My reading of Greene (1973) alerted me that in reflecting on myself as a conscious object, I would encounter varying degrees of change in my present outlook, responses,

and practices and find meaningful, creative ways of representing those changes. Autoethnography enabled me not only to chronicle the changes that I experienced but to analyze how I reconciled myself to those changes.

The goal of autoethnography is not to make judgments or hasty generalizations, but to convey the insights that emerge as the author reflects over the process of experience. Reaching an end or conclusion is neither the goal nor the full manifestation of the narrative; rather, the researcher is concerned with sense-making and developing a platform for reconciling discomforts, understanding self and the surrounding world. Chatham-Carpenter (2010) asserts that learning occurs during the process of constructing an autoethnography and that this process should be approached with a greater commitment to continuous learning than to completion and finiteness. Autoethnography can be found in the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, communication, cultural studies, race and gender, aging, education, nursing, medicine, and politics (Ellis & Bochner, 1996). This interdisciplinary nature is part of the amorphous power of the narrative process. While the characterizations of autoethnography are multifarious, they share the common theme of personalized, reflective writing that allows the researcher to question how and why experiences occur, how she interprets these experiences, and the social and cultural factors that impact her journey of inquiry.

Criticisms

Documentation of the process of the human experience and journey can be undermined and undervalued when it comes both to academia's and the public's desire for restrictively quantifiable outcomes. Self-study researchers may be criticized as being "self-serving" due to how they choose to present, analyze, and report personal experience as data (Bullough and Pinnegar, 2001, p.15). These accounts of experience are criticized for their imaginative and unconventional

use of science (Denzin & Lincoln, 2007; Lincoln & Cannella, 2008). Moreover, as autoethnography defies the conventions of traditional research methods, it is highly criticized on the basis that it is absent of calculable outcomes and "systematicity" (Wall, 2006, p.155).

According to Ellis and Bochner (1996), people who were educated to treat human subjectivity as a threat to rationality are most apt to prioritize objective truth over emotion and judgment (p. 21). Code (1993) advocates for standpoint perspective as a consideration of the criteria and circumstances that one relies upon when forming judgments. In essence, the inquiry that affects practice emerges out of position and subjectivity. Alcoff (2001) further contends that inquiries and judgments may emerge out of social identities, which act as a standpoint for constructing knowledge and for contesting dominant points of view held by dominant groups. Goodall's (2000) contention that as autoethnography explores aspects of life that directly relate to human emotions and sensitivities, it defies "patriarchal bias" (Denzin, 1989, p. 38). Lincoln and Cannella (2008) take this further when they state that patriarchal bias is at the foundation of traditional empirical research and is based in "White, male, capitalist dominance" (p. 279). Autoethnography also rejects the rationalism of scientific research. Goodall (2000) continues:

> Scientific research is "masculine" in orientation because it assumes there is a knowable, external reality that principled inquiry can observe, identify, classify, and report on. It further assumes that knowledge should be additive; to know something of scholarly value is to add to an existing body of facts another fact, then another then another. And the explanation, because it is generalizable, should predict future actions within the domain. (p.59)

Is this not what research is supposed to do? Make things cookie-cutter easy? Render all things generalizable and predictable? Release researchers and educators from the challenges of

confronting self or confronting the possibilities of the alternate realities of others? It is understandable that autoethnography brings discomfort to those satisfied to make generalizations, generalizations grounded in the technical rationalism that emanate from a society characterized by European American male dominance, a society that marginalizes minority groups, impoverished groups, and the less educated.

According to Grbich (2007), autoethnography is criticized as being "too indulgent, self-absorbed, introspective, and insufficiently objective" (p. 63). This attitude reflects the priorities of traditional research, which calls for researcher distance and objectivity. Anyone opting to engage in autoethnography has to be willing to confront and reveal self, emotions, truths, and subjectivities. I agree that autoethnography is self-indulgent, but it is the very essence of self-indulgence that enables the researcher to engage in autoethnography successfully. I am convinced that it is more selfless and courageous – even "risky" (Ellis, 1997, p. 2) – to openly reveal and confront one's own thoughts, emotions, motives, and behaviors in the light of the subjectivities and histories from which they arise than to operate "objectively," guarded and distanced from the impact of human experiences.

Critics of autoethnography also suggest that the centering of oneself marginalizes the narratives of others and that this endeavor leads to a lack of balanced perspective (Grbich, 2007). However, I believe that as one centers self and story, the reader has the power to do with it as she wills. The reader's responses are neither silenced nor discredited. Balance is derived when the autoethnographer assumes the moral obligation of inviting readers to participate in the reflective and narrative process, to interpret meaning, and to construct their own narratives. In this regard, there can be no stratifying, homogenizing, or colonizing of any one story.

Although autoethnography reveals much about the author and the various contexts in which the author sojourns, the author's purpose is not to translate how those experiences connect to the lives and cultures of others. That level of connectability is left to the reader. The perceived and widely accepted value of scholarship in a work is not traditionally characterized by its ego-centric nature, but by how the author is able to keep from being too personally involved in the research. Goodall (2000) provides an account in which one of his autoethnographic works was reviewed as being "unethical" on the basis that it was "too autobiographical" (p. 91). Goodall's critics held the position that the less that is known about the writer, the better the body of research. The sole application of the scientific method to research removes us from the truths and "convictions of our own experiences, subjectivities, and language" (Ellis & Bochner, 1996, p.20). It presumes a certain level of distancing, which enables the researcher to extricate herself from her own inner processes, so that she is more consumed with external inquiry. Ellis and Bochner (1996) make clear, however, that the inventive or constructive nature of autoethnography is not "a license to turn serious, systematic inquiry into frivolous relativism where anything goes" (p. 20). Rather, it is an opportunity to centralize the seriousness and interconnectedness of human experience, socio-cultural agents, and expressiveness. Perhaps the reason for criticism about authoethnography is that the critics have marginalized the reflective process, as well as devalued the prospect of how hearing one's experience incites hope in another. They have sanctioned as quintessential the knowledge of the "socially sanctioned expert" (Wall, 2006, p.154). I agree that it is difficult to contain autoethnography, to encapsulate what the researcher may divulge. Anyone who sanctions a type of purely scientific and objective crafting for knowing and truth telling is likely to be disturbed by the subjective, personalized, and emotional nature of autoethnography.

Relevance of Autoethnography

Autoethnography shows the researcher's growth process, the process of becoming, rather than allowing her to simply stand from afar and describe someone else's growth process. As I considered autoethnography as a methodology for my project, I was concerned about its validity and legitimacy as a developing research method. I soon realized that my apprehension was not about autoethnography as a method, but about the validity and credibility of my personal narrative. "Who cares about my experiences?" "To whom am I to tell my story?" "So what?" "Who is going to listen?" "What will it change?" "How will it affect the field of educational policy?" I realized that these questions were indications of my courtship with skepticism and fear, the same skepticism and fear that supports the pervasiveness of technical rationalism. I was more concerned with "policing" my work to make it suitable for authorities than about the inward process and experience of personal and professional growth that I would undertake (Ellis, 1997, p.1). I took comfort in Ellis' (1997) assertion that the telling of one's personal story can have the potential to impact wider social policy as the social is impacted by a collective of individual experiences.

One teacher's story can provide a non-threatening and non-judgmental lens through which other teachers can see their own mistakes, reflect, recognize wasted time, and consider realities beyond what she knows. I want to encourage other teachers to consider reflection as a response to the rationalism that is failing many of our teachers and students. Greene (1973) contends that "the teacher's responsibilities become more and more complex; and he is required every day to reinterpret, to make his own sense of modern life, because it cannot be fully apprehended by conventional means" (p. 291). Practice by technicism alone is irresponsible and insensitive for human learning. My study's purpose is not in seeing my manner of reflective practice

imposed upon every teacher as a diagnosis for what ails African American students in urban schools, but to challenge teachers to examine the potentials for their own reflective practice and the impact of their subjectivities on the students in their in the classrooms. According to Hollins (2012), teacher reflection, particularly in urban schools, should occur within a professional community in which teachers collaborate and engage in "mutual exchange that influence individual and collective practices and thinking for the purpose of improving learning outcomes in a particular area or for a particular population of students" (22). According to King (2014), this collective approach to reflective practice is indicative of an Afrocentric orientation to teaching and learning that democratizes knowledge by decentralizing the hegemonic narrative that misrepresents cultures and groups that exist outside of the norm of the hegemony. Through collective efforts, teachers of urban students work for a culturally informed emancipatory knowledge by using words, images, and graphics to centralize culturally informed curricular through "principles of inclusions, representation, accurate scholarship, indigenous voice, critical thinking, and collective humanity" (14). While I believe that a culturally centered and context specific approach to collegial reflection can be beneficial in democratizing classrooms and minimizing the inequities of technical rationalism, for the purpose of responding to the questions of this research, I opted for a more independent, self-inquiry approach to reflective practice.

I share Greybeck's (2002) notion that "as teachers we should study our own teaching practices through dialogues with ourselves as subject-researchers" (p. 174). I further believe, as does Greybeck (2002) that we will see the benefits of self-study and impart that reflective process to our students so that they also can interrogate who they are as a result of and as a part of the world around them. In addition to this, reflective teaching can be inspired by one's reading of another teacher's autoethnography. The language that one uses to interpret her own observations,

actions, assumptions, and interactions is a reflection of her belief systems. Her use of language beckons readers to consider their use of language as they interpret the words of the autoethnographer and the possibilities that it offers for their practice. Encouraged by Ellis (1999), I conducted self-study that empowered me to better understand why I say and do what I say and do, in and outside of my classroom.

An autoethnography about one teacher's experience can teach or inspire another teacher to question her own sense of identity, place, and power within systems and hierarchies of education. Furthermore, a teacher can be challenged to examine the connections between her personal self and professional self, as well as how she interacts with the world around her. According to Ellis and Bochner (1996), the pragmatic nature of autoethnography lies not in generalizable truthfulness, but in its usefulness. Claudio Moreira (2008) asserts, "I cannot write under a system that tries to divide me. I am whole: father, husband, graduate student, White, male, Latino, and so on" (p.666). His quest for self- discovery and a new approach to evaluating his work constituted his use of authoethnography. Claudio Moreira (2008) contends,

> Some people say that our mission as scholars is to analyze experiences, and that we need to use theory as a tool in order to do it well. When I look at the system of higher education, I realize that one needs to question what is considered knowledge. What I do not need is a theoretical body of knowledge that lacks experience or views experience as less legitimate….What I am talking about is the lived experience….The lived experience that is needed for an action that is committed to social justice. The lived experience that each one of us has and whose freedom academic walls limit. I am fighting for survival. I am trying to discover my own roots/body/self, fighting for a different way through which my work can be measured and judged. (p. 665 - 667)

Autoethnography should not be interpreted as an alternate method of research waiting to be validated by and through the hegemony of more traditional research processes. Rather, it is a vigilant and emotional process of inquiry and reflection through which the researcher attempts to understand and interpret life's experiences, and reconcile those experiences with her humanness, and socio-cultural histories.

Autoethnographic readings of a teacher's experience could alert another educator to obstacles, consequences, remedies, and possibilities of her practice. Banks and Banks (2000), as well as Kneller and Boyd (2008), reported that their reading of autoethnography inspired them to change the direction of their practices. As communications professors for graduate and undergraduate students at the University of Idaho, Banks and Banks (2000) found that their reading of Ron Pelias' "Critical Life" challenged their assumptions of normalcy in their profession and caused them to be more "self-reflexive" (p.235). Moreover, they began to "consider writing more as a personal engagement, inserting felt experience and emotion into text" (p. 236). They became emboldened to "inculcate and model a critical attitude and self-disclosiveness in our [their] teaching and learning" (p. 236). I agree with other theorists that think there may be personal and professional risk involved in narrating discontenting and conflicting experiences (Banks & Banks, 2000; Goodall, 2008). However, accepting these risks by reflecting upon, writing about, and discussing our experiences as teacher practitioners is a formidable way of breaking the silence invoked by technical rationalism.

After reading an autoethnography, a second grade teacher gives an account of how she began to use crocheting for instruction and management purposes. Inspired by how the author of the autoethnography, also a second grade teacher, used knitting to engage students and develop fine motor skills, the teacher began to use crocheting as an activity to promote literacy learning

and problem solving skills (Kneller & Boyd, 2008). Crocheting became a social event, which inspired students to discuss and write their ideas about economy, family, values, and education.

Autoethnographic reading has the potential to move both the researcher and reader to deeper places within themselves and their subjectivities so that they become more reflective and challenge their own assumptions of normalcy and passive acceptance of conventionalism.

I was skeptical – or, perhaps, fearful – about doing an autoethnography. After all, the ones that I had examined involved chronic illness (Neville-Jan, 2003), tragedies (Ellis, 1995; Hoppes, 2005), abuse (Minge, 2007), homelessness (Snyder-Young, 2011), and spiritual crisis (Cozart, 2010). My story was neither based on abuse, nor was it tragic, at least not in my mind. However, the goal of autoethnography is not to re/produce tragedies but to inspire, to give hope, to tell and seek understanding, as well as to possibilities for change. It informs or cautions the reader about the deeply involved process of attaining self-truth and revelation while confronting life's binaries and extremes.

After hearing his presentation at the UICC Conference in Chicago, a colleague told Claudio Moreira, "Claudio, your words touched me. I always have been skeptical towards autoethnographic work, but you show me its importance" (Moreira, 2008, p. 667). Did this one presentation convert the colleague? Probably not, but it may have helped him to at least consider the possibilities of autoethnography and the stirring power of narrating personal experience. Moreira's mission of social change required that he use his autoethnographic work to engage and reach others. Hence, autoethnography is not about excluding others, but about including self in order to engage others. Good autoethnography, according to Ellis (2005), presents stories that "make oth-

ers feel liberated, freer to speak without feeling their stories are not worth telling" (p. 401). Furthermore, autoethnography is not about what theory is used to construct the experience, but more about what the experience can reveal about theory.

As one deeply committed to understanding and developing my spiritual and emotional journeys, I am greatly inspired by the work of Ellis (1997), who contends that the autoethnographic process is an emotional, reflexive, spiritual process that "releases a man to himself" (p. 137) so that he may evoke emotional responsiveness in the reader by "bringing life to research" (p.2). Autoethnographies can be constructed in such a manner that listeners "sense some evocative power, embodiment, and understanding of life that comes through the concrete details of autoethnographic narrative" (Ellis, 1997, p.7). My desire is, in fact, to construct an autoethnography that is sensitive to my real life experiences, and that uses the details of my teaching practice and life subjectivities to bring to life my pedagogy of reflective practice.

Setting the Context

I work as a second grade teacher in an elementary school. This school site was the primary context for my research project. The school is located within a large public school district in the southeast United States. The school is also situated within 5 miles of a federal penitentiary. During the time of this study the school served 552 students, ranging from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade. Many of the neighborhoods that feed into the school have challenges that frequently characterize many inner city communities, such as poverty and crime. Specific criminal activity in the surrounding neighborhoods included murders, rapes, robberies, aggravated assaults, residential burglaries, non-residential burglaries, auto thefts, and larceny.

The student population was 96% African American, 3 % Hispanic, 1.4 % Multiracial, and less than 1% Caucasian American. Of the total student population, 100% were eligible for

free lunch and meet the requirements for receiving Title I services. Approximately 10% of the students had been diagnosed with a learning disability that required participation in the special education program which consists of three classes: 1.) specified learning disabilities, 2.) mildly intellectually disabled, and 3.) emotional behavior disorder. Approximately 129 students qualified for tutorial and intervention services based on inadequate performance on the previous year's Criterion Referenced Competency Test, a standardized test designed to measure student mastery of skills outlined in the state curriculum.

Ninety seven percent of the students lived in homes in which English was the primary language. Furthermore, the 45% student transiency rate of 2012-2013 caused classrooms to undergo a 47% change in classroom enrollment throughout the course of the academic term. The faculty and staff often deliberated over ways to improve school attendance as student absences and tardiness were a concern for the school.

The school had a number of parent and community outreach programs. Although the school had a functioning PTA, only approximately 15% of parents were actively involved. There was a school foundation that supported initiatives such as playground enhancement, urban gardens development, arts projects display, and assisting families in need. A parent center was established to serve the needs of parents by providing a family clothes bank, parenting workshops, literacy development, and job readiness training. The school had business partners who provide money and resources to support the schools programs.

Kids Matter Academy is an afterschool program that was launched after members of the staff secured a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant that is used to fund afterschool programs in low socioeconomic and low-performing communities. The program served one hundred students and had three components: the afterschool program, the Saturday academy, and the

summer science academy. The grant also provided job training, academy enrichment, GED training, and other services to support community members and parents of students attending Kids Matter Academy

Although faculty and staff attempted to motivate and sustain positive student engagement and student management through various rewards and incentives, discipline was an ongoing challenge. School administrators responded to large numbers of student referrals using various consequences including time outs, student conferences, parent conferences, and suspensions.

At the time of this study, there were twenty one students in my second grade classroom – eighteen African American and one Hispanic American. There were ten male students and eleven female students in my class. Four of my students received services from the student support team due to severe academic deficits. Twenty four percent of my students read above grade level, while 47% read below grade level.

Data Generation and Interpretation Methods

As my data generation, data interpretation, and data representation were informed by and expressed through my subjectivities, I found it difficult to separate these processes. I agree with Richardson and St. Pierre (2005), who note that gathering data and analyzing that data might not occur as separated processes. Throughout this project, the data generation, interpretation, and representation, at times, occurred simultaneously. Reflection occurred through the actual process of writing about what moved, disturbed, provoked, and challenged me (Blair, 2007). As I analyzed data, I tried to construct meaning and represent that meaning through narratives and poetry in a way that made sense to me, as well as enabled others to understand how I constructed meaning that would influence my practice. I did not set in advance exactly how and when I would use

narrative writing and poetry. I was reassured by Ellis (1999) that "form will evolve during the research process" (p. 679).

I understood my data generation to be the chronicling of classroom experience through journaling and the gathering of artifacts related to classroom experiences. The interpretation of the data was the process of making meaning of experience by considering how factors that were and were not visible may have impacted classroom encounters, as well as how my subjectivities worked in these meaning-making processes. The representation of the data was my use of narrative writing, poetry, and music to express my interpretations of reflections on the data. The experiences that I chronicled in my reflective journal were evidence of my subjectivities, as I was likely to chronicle that which was noticeable to me, that which stirred my interests and emotions, and that which then became the impetus of further considerations. In essence, I had some immediate responses to data generation. These responses sometimes inspired immediate data interpretation and representation. An attempt to purposely separate these processes would suggest that reflection has to be a process that occurs in fragments, isolated in time and space from the moment of experience. This study allowed me to experience, reflect, interpret, and represent these processes without obligating myself to any particular order. Therefore, the forthcoming discussion will present not only how I generated data, but how this data was interpreted and represented.

Multiple Genres and Crystallization

Through autoethnography, I examined how multiple self-voices and identities were layered throughout my reflective practice. Autoethnography allowed me to explore how my reflective practice originated in and from multiple voices that represented my subjectivities, beliefs, and life practices. Each of these voices affected not only my teaching practice, but also the ways

in which I reflected, chronicled the reflections, and responded to those reflections. According to Richardson (2000) and Tracy (2010), crystallization, or the use of multiple data forms, employs various methods which increases opportunities for constructing meaning and examining the complexities of the research question, as well as for discovering new aspects of one's relationship to a topic. In this manner, crystallization lends itself to multi-genre representations. The use of multiple methods enabled me to use images, narrative writing, and poetry to represent different voices and different perspectives that come from within me as well as from the outside world.

Multiple genre data generation provided opportunities for each of my subjective voices to speak in forms relevant to each identity. Mackinlay (2009) suggested that through multiple genres of writing, I would be better able to explore the impacts of multiple voices on my reflective practice. Furthermore, writing enabled me to distinguish, analyze, and possibly reconcile any existing tensions among myself-voices (Ellis et al., 2008). Multiple genre inquiry forms permitted me to write in various forms from the specific context and time in which I was situated and to feel freed from "trying to write a single text in which everything is said at once to everyone" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). My focus instead was to write reflectively, creatively, and analytically to share with readers the ways in which I constructed and represented meaning, as well as to invite them to consider new ways of making meaning applicable and useful in their own contexts (Ryan, Amorim, & Kusch, 2010).

As this research was designed to serve as one response to the technical rationalism that directs much of educational practice, I believed it was critical to employ methods of inquiry that did not undermine individualistic creativity and subjectivity. According to Richardson and St. Pierre (2005), crystallization "deconstructs the traditional idea of validity" because it does not

impose a single truth, but strives to deepen understanding and widen inquiry (p. 963). Pelias (Ellis et al., 2008) contends that the orthodoxy of being consistently rational or too hasty to cite proof in qualitative research marginalizes the experience and presence of heart. After reading Mitra (2010) and Ellis et al. (2008), I was inspired to use multiple genre performative texts – such as journal reflections, character portraits, narratives, performative writings, and poetry. Multiple genre performative texts enabled me to use my reflective writing on classroom events as more than texts to be read and analyzed, but as a means to convey life and experience that elicit human sensitivity and emotion through critical responsiveness.

Journals

I chose to use a journal style that was reflective and helped me to link my professional life with my personal life as I considered how all aspects of my life and my students' lives affected our performance and behaviors in the classroom (Tillman, 2003). The journal is a means for practitioners "to communicate their thoughts and feelings about teaching and learning, and their beliefs and behaviors toward members of the school community, particularly students" (Tillman, 2003, p. 232). Although journal writing is widespread, I have found no prescriptive discussion for how it should be carried out. According to Hubbs and Brand (2005), reflective journaling methods have not been quantitatively or qualitatively studied extensively enough to assess the valuation of any single journal method over another. Not only does the journal provide thick descriptions of experiences, but also reflections about what is learned, questioned, observed, and cause for further exploration (Lupinski, Jenkins, Beard, & Jones, 2012). As journal writing becomes more reflective, the author "defines, questions, and interacts with content, concepts, ideas, values, beliefs, and feelings" through both personal and professional lenses (Hubbs & Brand, 2005, p. 65). According to Mlynarczyk (2006), writing which engages the personal

and professional should be done "regularly…at least five pages a week" and use "expressive language" (p. 14). Although the reflective journal writer may discuss the experiences of others, she is most committed to "systematic" (p.307) writing about her own experiences and self-observations (Attard, 2008). In the journal the writer "questions the foundations and prior learning that went into the formation of a given belief…to consider whether a given belief came about as a result of concepts tacitly accepted, or as a result of a deliberate thought process" (Hubbs & Brand, 2005). Journal writing exposes and confronts assumptions. Furthermore, journaling indicates if thoughts and beliefs are challenged, unchallenged, tested, or untested.

During this writing process, I tried to "construct meanings, interpretations, new knowledge and understandings" (Attard, 2008, p. 308). I did not find research that conclusively stated that journal writing must include a date of entry. However, in order to track my observations, experiences, and stages of thinking and reflecting, I included dates of entries in my journal. I adopted elements of various characterizations of reflective journaling in order to frame my use of the reflective journal. Before each journal entry I included a brief introduction of the entry. I also included a heading for each entry. For some entries, contingent on theme and complexity, I included a brief discussion following the reflection. For some entries, contingent on theme and complexity, I included a brief discussion following the reflection. I wanted to keep the integrity of my original entries; therefore, I did not always adhere to formal structures in writing.

Through reflective journaling, I used "detailed descriptions" to record and analyze classroom events (Shandomo, 2010, p. 107). These analyses fostered reflective thinking, which is reflected in my journal though conceptual understandings, questions, and challenges to existing ideas (Shandomo, 2010). The data generation period occurred daily over a nine-week period,

which constituted a quarter of a scholastic year in my professional schedule. Although I devoted a minimum of thirty minutes daily to reflecting on practice, some days I spent considerably more or less time to chronicling those reflections in my journal. The time that I spent writing in my journal was contingent upon the nature of my noticings and my responses to the noticings. The reflective journal allowed me to refine the sense making and interpretation of my reflections, and to become more of a "connoisseur" of my own thinking and understanding (Slotnick &Janesick, 2011, p. 1354). I documented both my inner and outer responses to the interactions and occurrences that I noticed in my classroom. The journal entries allowed me to provide rich accounts about what happened daily in my practice and about my initial responses to these occurrences while also permitting me to respond to them critically and raise questions for continued consideration. Greene (1973) challenged me to write daily in order to pose questions for and about practice.

According to Few, Stephens, and Rouse-Arnett (2003), journaling is a "nontraditional source of data that is physical archival evidence" of how one understands "self and relations to others on a certain day, during a specific event, or at a significant time" (p. 211). My journal entries included specific accounts of classroom experiences that proved to be noteworthy or particularly jarring. According to Moon (2004), what the reflective participant learns depends on what

she notices. My chronicling in a journal became the impetus of deeper and more meaningful reflective activity and revealed my subjectivities. My subjectivities presented themselves not only through my noticing, but in my reflections and responses to the noticing. As I journaled about classroom experiences, I used pseudonyms to exclude students' names and mask all identities in order to protect their privacy. Inspired by Angrosino (1998) and Esquith (2007), I developed composite characters that compiled traits and behaviors of multiple classroom participants. The reflective journal, used both inside and outside the school setting, allowed me not only to vividly describe what I saw and how I felt about occurrences in my practice, but helped me better understand how these responses were constructions of multiple selves. The journal entries made during practice were hurried and sometimes even messy, so as not to impose upon my actual work with students; however, I extended those notes at a later time (Ellis, 1999). When I jour-

Figure 1. Reflective journal

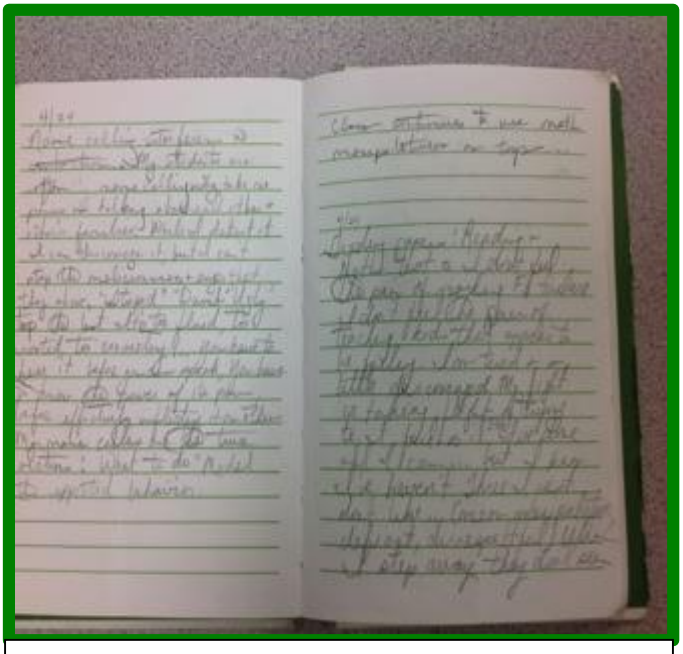

Figure 2: Reflective journal entry

naled outside of practice I had more time to deliberate on a noticing. This deliberation on a noticing often included hearing the various ways that my self-identities responded to the noticing. My Journal writing and reflecting were the springboard for a larger narrative story (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989), which did involve my self-identities.

Character Portraits of Self Identities

Inspired by Rushing's (2011) portrayal of six characters that constitute the complexity of her teacher identity, I used character portraits to represent the layers of myself that were operating during my teacher reflective practice. Rushing (2011) used narrative writing, storytelling, dialogue, poetry, autoethnographic vignettes, and photographs to represent the multiple genres embodied within six identities: daughter, wife, mother, teacher, writer, and researcher. She deemed each of these identities as a "character." Lawrence-Lightfoot (2008), the pioneer or portraiture, created portraits of character and culture using words to capture the essence of values, structures, style, and personality. Portraiture emerged from Lawrence-Lightfoot's realization that there are complex qualities of character and history that should be considered when making inquiry into human experience present. According to Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005), portraiture is central to providing context for understanding how the researcher defines, shapes, and interprets the data he/she collects. Essentially, character portraits were my adaptation of "narrative portraits" that rely on rich description to tell stories and "document the specifics, the nuance, the detailed description of a thing, a gesture, a voice, an attitude" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005, p. 10, 11). These portraits were developed through narrative writing, photographs, images, and vignettes of snapshots of times in my life. Therefore, they provided context and dimension that the reader can use to better understand my reflections and how I responded to those reflections.

My reflections on professional practice are not limited exclusively to my classroom during the school day. My practitioner reflections are influenced by the multiple voices that come from my multiple identities and subjectivities. I delineate "identities" as those social positions of which I take claim as they emerge out of social constructions (Alcoff, 2001). While I am aware that these social constructions privilege a Eurocentric, male-dominant hegemony, my primary research goal is not to create a critique of this hegemony, but to be honest about its existence and its effects in my understanding of who I am and how I function (Code, 1993). My use of "roles" refers to how I show my identities through interactions, behaviors, and functions. Throughout the writing of this research, I frequently used the words "identities" and "roles" interchangeably. Jensen-Hart and Williams (2010) assert that the responsible autoethnographer provides "background regarding their social positioning to help readers understand context and identities that shape the writing" (p. 452). According to Ely, Vinz, Downing, and Anzul (1997), an emphasis on subjectivities is an integral part of the qualitative research process. It involves courageous, imaginative, and emotional responsiveness as "researchers face what they learn about themselves and others in the process of the research" (p. 53). Moreover, teachers might recognize and critique the impact of their own cultural and linguistic backgrounds, values, and beliefs on their students from diverse backgrounds (Lee, 2010).

To believe that only the professional educator voice is heard in my reflections as practitioner is to assume that my other subjective voices are capable of lying dormant. I recognize that, as Greene (1973) noted, "to identify oneself with a one-dimensional view is always to deny a part of one's humanity" (p. 9). Throughout this study I used "I" indiscriminately to refer to the individual core self, but also to the multiple identities of which the "I" is comprised. "I" is used

to present myself as the first person narrator of experiences, determining how and when the individual self-identities should be blended or isolated in their audibility (Jackson & Mazzei, 2008). I understand self to be a person who is a "dialectic blend of the individual and the social" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989, p.8). I believe that there is a core self, which is the embodiment of multiple voices and identities that serves as the chorus voice. I offer the metaphor of the song because it permits each of my subjective identities to present its own verse, while my core self presents as the chorus, constantly reminding me and the listener of the overall theme and dominant tone of the whole composition. In this manner, each self-identity is the understory or glimpse of the blended whole (Spry, 2009).

I was inspired by Jensen's, Hart's and Williams' (2010) assertion that reflections are "situated within fragmented and diverse selves and identities" that are "intersubjective realities" (p. 450). I used "identities" to refer to the construct of a persona based on subjectivities, norms, and beliefs. I used "role" to refer to the operations and behaviors that I associate with a specific identity. I generated data by creating character portraits of seven identities to which I subscribe: Christian, Mother, Wife, Daughter, Black Woman, Technorationalist, and Etiquette Self. I chose these selves because these voices resonated most frequently and audibly in this research. After deep analysis and consideration of my daily schedule for a week, I found that my conversations and regular activities predominantly involved these voices. Humphreys (2005) used autoethnographic vignettes and Rushing (2011) relied on character portraits to define their identities, to present their approach for looking inward, and to invite readers into their sense-making process. Inspired by Rushing's use of character portraits, I used narrative writing to convey how each of these identities have developed and been sustained. These character portraits gave insights into

how I thought, reflected, and performed in practice. My understanding of my subjectivities helped me to understand and interpret my reflections.

Narrative Inquiry

Narratives tell the story of an experience. According to Clandinin (1989) the storying of experience for research in teaching practice involves reflection on how school life is a "form of living affected by personal histories, social and community relations" (p. 1-2). In accord with this storying of experience, I will discuss my classroom experiences and my reflections on those experiences in my journal and represent them through poetry, music, captions, and autoethnographic stories. It is critical to note that my use of narrative is characterized by my interpretations of classroom experiences, as well as my interpretations of how my own subjectivities work within these experiences.

Schnee's (2009) work was useful in my using personal narrative writing to bridge the worlds of pedagogy, research, and lived experience. Through personal narrative writing I located and situated my professional reflections in the larger contexts of my subjectivities. According to Richardson and St. Pierre (2005), narrative writing as inquiry does not require me to rely on mechanistic conventions, to make universal claims, or to privilege any method of knowing and telling. Rather, narrative inquiry permitted me to use language to construct and engage classroom experiences and personal subjectivities as I wrote reflexively from particular positions at specific times. The realness and liveliness of narrative writing moves the reader through the experiences that precede the author's reflective processes. According to Denzin (1997),

> Language and speech do not mirror experience: They create experience and in the process of creation constantly transform and defer that which is being described. The meanings of a subject's statements are there, always in motion… They can never be a final, accurate representation of what was meant or said – only different textual representations of different experience. (p. 5)

Performative Writing

The link between narrative and experience can be expressed further through performative writing that "create[s] the effect of reality, showing characters embedded in the complexities of lived moments" (Bochner & Ellis, 2003, p. 509). Although there were multiple voices that operated in my professional reflective practice, the common thread among them was the performative. This project was highly impacted by my involvement in the arts and performance. Kohl (2002) contends, "teaching is performance" to the degree that the teacher's language shapes students attitudes, as well as the learning environment (p. 153). According to Ellis (1999), my commitment to meaning making and understanding, rather than mere presentation of facts and truth, lent itself to an arts-infused autoethnography.

The use of performative writing allowed me to show that I was "a live participative embodied researcher" as I drew from my lived experiences in order to do and be in the research process and conduct inquiry into my reflective practice (Spry, 2001, p. 709). According to Eisner (2006), the aim of this type of artistic and performative research is to use the data "in some productive way to help you understand more imaginatively and more emotionally problems and practices that warrant attention in our schools" (p.10).

Poetry

I also used poetry as a method of inquiry. The poetic voice allowed me to express my reflective voice using metaphor, analogy, figurative language, and visualization. Following each poem, I included a narrative to discuss the impetus of the poem. The narrative contextualized the poem in the scope of the research project, and documented the times, settings, and role(s) most at work in its construction. Each poem was linked to a journal account or to a theme woven throughout multiple journal entries. Slotnick and Janesick (2011) explore the integrated use of reflective journaling and data poetry in qualitative inquiry. Furman (2004) used poems as qualitative data to explore highly subjective positions and behavior regarding lived experiences. Through poetry, he conveyed feelings, emotions, vulnerabilities, biases, and images that pushed him towards self-revelation as he reflected on his father's cancer. The poems serve as documents of experience and perception, but also as instruments for continued reflection. Each poem involved in this data was immediately followed by a narrative, in which Furman raised questions and attempted to make sense of his father's sickness and his responsiveness to it. Furman (2007) contends that the use of narrative reflection following a poem "contextualizes, explores, and expands each poem" such that the author's truth expressed through images, metaphor, and emotions might elicit empathy in readers (p. 1). In this study, narrative reflections served as both data and data analysis expressed in an artistic and imaginative manner.

Authenticity of Voice

Jackson and Mazzei (2008) contend that, "questions of voice and authenticity are at the heart of claims of what is 'real' in qualitative research" (p. 20). While authenticity is a shifting signifier, it is important to establish a working definition for the purposes of this study. In this study, authenticity involves the researcher's commitment to achieving voice that is inextricably

linked to being honest and transparent about what occurs in research and how she responds to the research. It entails the researcher's ability and commitment to rise above restraints that keep her from discussing the truth about the self and world as she interprets them (Jackson & Mazzei, 2008, p. 1). Accordingly, voice resonates in what is said, what is not said, as well the manner in which these ideas are conveyed. Authentic voice emerges as the researcher reveals her assumptions and biases.

Moreover, I agree with Jackson and Mazzei (2008) that authenticity of voice relates to how the researcher expresses truth and reflects the meaning-making process of an experience with consideration and commitment to personal ideals and beliefs. For this study, the use of autoethnographic writing was my attempt to use language to represent and interpret my experience and my reality and construct meaning for myself. This type of personal investment in writing and language may result in gaps and confusing moments for the reader who does not have similar experiences or who might employ a different use of language and expression. While I endeavored to write convincingly and with clarity, I did not assume that I could predetermine how my use of language and expression would affect the reader (Jackson & Mazzei, 2008). As I wrote, my choices of voice took into account how I represented classroom accounts in my journal, how I interpreted those accounts in immediate journaling, in reflective thought, in my analysis, and in my representations. I was aware that my presentations privileged my voice and the subjectivities out of which they emerged. However, marginalizing my own subjectivities and beliefs would have privileged the voices of others, which were disconnected from my experiences, resulting in dishonest and inauthentic voice.

According to Richardson and St. Pierre (2005), writing as inquiry allowed me to link use of language and understanding of my subjectivities to "present views of reality and self" (p.960)

that informed my reflections. My desire was to be authentic in my data generation and presentation. Moreover, I agree with Tracy (2010), who contends that authenticity does not suggest a single truth, but bears "sincerity that is marked by honesty and transparency about the researcher's biases, goals, and foibles as well as how these played role in the methods" (p.841). I am further inspired by Humphrey's (2005) claim that authenticity is achieved when the autoethnographer gives flesh to his narrative by using personal details to create a plausible story that conveys emotions and feelings, fears and uncertainties, to which readers can identify. My reflections were not isolated occurrences, separated from self; rather, reflections emerged from the innermost components of self. The authentic is intertwined with the reflective when "there is adequate self-awareness and self-exposure for the reader to make judgments about [my] point of view" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 964). The use of character portraits in this autoethnography enabled me to understand how my teacher reflections emerged as layers of multiple voices of self and how those reflections affected my practice. The use of character portraits assisted my self –investigations through the presentation of the "multiple layers of the consciousness" that fuel my reflective practice (Vasconcelos, 2011). At times my data generation method seems scattered and disconnected. I believe that this was indicative of the sometimes messy and confusing process of deconstructing reflective practice that is impacted by multiple voices that reside together.

Ensuring Quality

A professor once challenged my use of autoethnography by asking, "How do I know if what you are saying is true and if these stories really happened?" Initially, I was intimidated and overwhelmed by this question. My intimidation then transformed into offense that someone would question the existence and honesty of my experiences. However, this question alerted me to the significance of ensuring the quality of my work. While it was ultimately the reader's

choice to believe or disbelieve what she read, as the autoethnographer, it was my responsibility to present work that met standards of quality, to present work that demonstrated reasoning, as well as the justifications that supported the reasoning as I interpreted and presented them.

Bogdan and Biklen (2006) argue that while there are no standardized criteria for evaluating qualitative research, work should be "convincing, readable… and make a contribution to our understanding of human behavior" (p. 216-217). Banks and Banks (2000) assert that "there are no grounds for invalidating an author's own experience if it is rendered as believable" (p. 233). Tracy (2010) deems convincing research to be credible if it demonstrates "thick description, crystallization, multivocality, and reflections" (p. 840). I tried to ensure that my work was believable and convincing to my audience by employing rich descriptions in journaling and narrative writing, as well as using multiple forms of data generation, many of which were overlapping. Furthermore, my use of daily journaling showed that I was keeping an updated account of occurrences, and that I did not rely solely on my memory of past events to inform my research. By providing data that explained and visually presented my subjectivities and background, I aimed to convince readers that my research was trustworthy. I readily admit that the authority of my work is grounded in subjectivity and reflection.

In the interests of developing work that is valid, I subscribed to the notion of catalytic validity as put forth by Lather (1986). As this research allowed for ongoing reflection, self-scrutiny, and modification of practice based on those reflections, I acknowledged that transformation of my practice would result from my reflections. Lather (1986) asserts that, "catalytic validity represents the degree to which the research process reorients, focuses, and energizes participants towards knowing reality in order to transform a process" (p. 272). Furthermore, catalytic validity

does not allow for research neutrality as it recognizes how self-understanding is critical to the research process (Lather, 1986). Moreover, as my research validity lay in its pursuit of conscientious deliberations on context, self-identity, and classroom interactions, it aligned with a tenet of catalytic validity that the research provided opportunity for growth that resulted from "thoughtful assessment of experiences" (Lather, 2003, p. 195).

Trustworthy and convincing work is achieved through the researcher's attaining sincerity. Tracy (2010) outlines sincerity as a criterion of quality research that is "achieved through self-reflexivity, vulnerability, honesty, transparency, and data auditing" (p. 842). By sharing my subjectivities, biases, preferences, motives and their origins, I opened myself up to my readers. Furthermore, the sharing of my artistry through original poetry and music was very personal. I believe that the creation of any type of art is a very intimate and emotive process for the artist. Sharing work publicly entails being vulnerable to the opinions and interpretations of the audience. Operating in this vulnerability meant that I was not only allowing readers to access my reflective practice, but I was inviting their reactions and responses.

In the interests of readability, my goal was to write in a manner that was practical and easy to understand. My goal was to present clear lines of logic, as well as stories and poetry that were both telling and memorable. Because autoethnography does not readily fall under the criteria used to "police research" (Ellis, 1997) – thus making it difficult to normalize or make truth claims based on autoethnographical data – its legitimacy may be questioned. I used language to represent experience as I interpreted it. In this regard my subjectivities were continuously working and expressed themselves through my interpretations. As I generated data I was careful not to make truth claims that would alienate readers or be dismissive of their realities. I used language

to the best of my knowledge to represent experiences and reflections, as I perceived them. Watson (2009) asserts that plurimediality, which uses different media forms, provides multiple forms of visual representation, helping to frame the work for the reader's eye. According to Ellis (1997), the more the autoethnographer reveals, the more persuasive is his work. I showed my work by providing vivid images and "enough detail that readers may come to their own conclusions about the scene" (Tracy, 2010, p. 843).

I believe that this project makes a contribution to the growing body of literature on reflective practice. It extends the research on the actual practice of reflection in urban schools. This research advocates reflective practice among teachers, in a way that technical rationalism does not encourage. Although theorists have presented widespread explanations and characterizations for pedagogy of reflective practice, this study presents how reflection is used in practice and out of practice to impact teaching and learning for an African American teacher and her African American students.

Ethics

Ethics is the set of parameters and legislations that the researcher uses to regulate the research project and to protect human participants (Lincoln and Canella, 2008). Autoethnographers have the responsibility of protecting others who are implicated within their stories. According to Chatham-Carpenter (2010), although we must be committed to the storytelling process, we must also be mindful of other lives that may be affected by our narrative and representations. While striving for transparency and genuineness in my descriptions and storying, my responsibility was not to name or exploit the vulnerability of the second grade students in my classroom. My students and our classroom experiences served as the impetus for my reflective practice. However, according to my research design and questions, I was most committed to exploring who I was as

a reflective practitioner and how my reflections informed practice. Therefore, in my journaling about classroom experiences, I refrained from using names and masked all identities of specific children. Rather, I used pseudonyms and composite characters to protect their privacy (Angrosino, 1997; Ellis, 1999; Esquith, 2007). My research project was not about the actions and responses of my students, but about how I reflected on classroom encounters. In this regard, there was no need for me to collect data on specific students and directly implicate them in this research project.

As I wrote about my subjectivities and developed my character portraits, I discussed the impact of family members on the development of these identities. I was committed to maintaining awareness of privacy and to determining, responsibly, which bounds must not be crossed in my representations.

This research project was designed to examine my reflections on and in my practice. Through my data generation, I became aware of and discussed barriers that I encountered as a reflective practitioner. My data generation and data interpretation occurred both as separate and conjoined processes, contingent upon the nature of the experience and how I was situated within that experience. Moreover, through data generation and interpretation I examined and discussed how reflection impacts my practice. It was my goal that this study would inform how reflective practice might be used as a response to technical rationalism in an urban school context.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

It was April 27, 2010, just past 2:30 in the afternoon. My heart raced as I rubbed my hands against my pants, attempting to wipe off the sweat that glistened on my palms. I tried to appear poised and confident. On the inside, I questioned if I was truly ready for that moment. After a week of sleepless nights and days of writing, I was about to defend my comprehensive exam answers. This was a milestone of my doctoral experience. I started my presentation full of anxious optimism. One set of eyes looked at me with hopeful anticipation. Another set of eyes rested on me with concerned reservation. I answered my committee's questions to the best of my abilities, slightly impressed with my own responses. Then came a series of questions for which I was totally unprepared: *Who cares about your story? Why does it matter? How do I know that any of this even happened?* Feeling attacked and invalidated, I stood speechless. After a few seconds of silence and my advisor's attempts to throw me a lifeline, I tried to conjure some response. It was a shattered defense of my autoethnographic attempts. As I heard myself speaking, I felt myself sinking. While I have since forgotten my responses, I vividly remember those riveting questions. They have lingered as the propelling backdrop of my research project. I even recall thinking "He's right. In this vast sphere of educational policy, reform, curricula, theory, and philosophy, who cares about a Black teacher's experiences with Black students from the 'hood?" This question, which initially intimidated and humiliated me, eventually challenged and empowered me. Who should care? All of us, as these children and I are a microcosm of current urban education under the foot of technorationalism. This research tale matters as it reflects the power of reflection, and in the end technorationalism, to permeate oneself, one's pedagogy, and the children in one's classroom.

In the following section, I discuss my reflective practice. As my subjectivities permeate all my reflections, I begin with a brief summary of these voices. I could not determine how my subjectivities would present themselves prior to analysis. They emerged in analysis, thus they are discussed as findings. I then discuss the parameters of reflection in this analysis. I present these parameters as findings, as the parameters changed due to the continual interactions of reflective practice. This is followed by a presentation of the major findings of this study: how I reflected, how I responded to reflections, and the barriers to reflection. I conclude with a discussion of these findings.

Emergent Subjectivities

As I engaged in reflective practice, I realized that my noticings were based in my subjectivities, and only emerged within the context of reflection. Prior to engaging in my reflective exercise, I did not know what kinds of situations I would notice. My decision to take notice of certain situations and not others was prompted by my subjectivities. I hold many subjective identities, but I did not know which subjectivities would show themselves by taking notice of situations occurring in my practice. What I noticed did not emerge from nothing, from nowhere; there is no bird's eye view (Haraway, 1988). Noticings were provoked by that to which I resonate, personally and theoretically, and who I understand myself to be. Thus, an examination of my subjectivities was critical to understanding how I reflected, what provoked my noticings, how I communicated and examined my experiences, as well as how I constructed my responses. As Enis and McCauley (2002) note, educational practices and expectations represent one's values and beliefs, one's subjectivities. Seven subjectivities seemed most influential in shaping my actions, behaviors, attitudes, and disposition as it relates to this research: Black Woman, Black Mother, Daughter, Christian, Wife, Technorational self, and Etiquette self. I found that each of

these subjective identities had a voice. Sometimes the identities spoke in concert and sometimes they were disharmonious. They could be heard externally as well as internally, and spoke to varying degrees. Although they are individually storied below for clarification, they did not speak in isolation, but were intermingled in their influence. In the following sections I share the subjectivities that most consciously influenced my reflections on my practice.

Black Woman

Every day, I care for and style my own hair, which is in an Afro. Throughout the history of the United States, Black women have had to reconcile our beauty, inclusive of hair, amidst a social climate that most reveres images and traits associated with our White counterparts. As a child, and at times as a young adult, I questioned why my hair didn't look, feel, and grow in the way that was silky and bouncing with lots of body. All too often I rushed to "fix" my hair when it got too nappy. I experimented with various styles, including perms, low cuts, curls, and weave. As a mature woman, I found my greatest comfort in braids and styles absent of chemical processing. I empathize with any Black girl or woman trying to make peace with her hair in a social climate that has racialized hair as "good" or "bad." In this entry that empathy surfaces and compels me to modify my initial response to a female student who was over-attentive to her hair.

Journal: 5/20/2014

"Mrs. Fynn-Aikins, my braid is coming out." Today, one of my female students has been preoccupied with her hair. Almost every time I look at her, I find her fixing her hair.

(later) After I scolded her for giving more attention to her looks than to her school work she responded that her braid was coming out. The unapologetic tone of her voice indicated that she felt justified in her attentiveness to her hair. Having also felt the pains and embarrassment of braids falling out at inopportune times, I sympathized with her. Since

> going natural, refusing to perm my hair, I have worn braids for a large portion of my adult life. I pocketed my dismay. After sitting, twisting, turning, adjusting your head for six to eight hours (frequently more), you should be concerned when braids start falling out. Her braids appeared relatively new: her scalp appeared slightly aggravated by the tension of tight braiding. "My momma gone get me," she said in frustration. I didn't pursue why she thought her mom would "get" her. I assumed she was talking about her hair. She salvaged the fallen braid and tucked it safely in her book bag. I helped her to blend her natural hair in with the other braids. She calmed herself and didn't fidget with her hair anymore. At least I didn't see her fidgeting. She went on to complete the remaining tasks and had a good day.

Understanding my subjectivity as a Black woman enabled me to develop relationships and rapport with my Black students, particularly my Black female students. I connected with them on the basis of culture, race, and gender. Although we often shared differences in background and homelife, I found that we shared some mutual understandings and experiences as a result of our shared blackness. However, our relationships were not predicated upon our blackness. Moreover, being a Black woman, made me more conscientious and sensitive to how technical rationalism can work overtly and subversively to undermine exceptions to the status quo. In this regard, I was able to empathize with the racial plight of my female students, even when they were frequently unaware of the depth of animosity directed their way.

Black Mother

My attempts to build relationship and community among students included extending myself as a maternal figure. My having a deep, binding relationship with my own mother, as well as my mothering three children, have only reinforced my conviction about the mother-child

bond. In a larger social and cultural context, Langston Hughes' *The Negro Mother* (1931), portrays a generational mother for all Negro children. She situates herself as relentless and hopeful despite, and unyielding to, the institutions purposed to enslave her and her children of the present and forthcoming generations. Having studied and performed *The Negro Mother* twenty-seven years ago, I was impressed by Hughes' image of the community mother, the surrogate mother, taking on the children left motherless at the slave auction or by lynching. *The Negro Mother* further inspires my understanding of who I am as mother teacher accountable to and responsible for African American children from urban backgrounds.

Journal: 4/17/2014

> "I am your mama while you are at school. When you get in trouble, people tell on you…to me. I am the one responsible for you at school. No matter what you do, it comes back to me. You are on my roll…my child." Whenever my kids cut up in specials, the teacher tells on them as if I am their mother, even though special area teachers and I have the same training and authority as certified teachers. Oddly enough, I am compelled to intervene. I do feel a sense of ownership for their progress and behavior, even when they are away from me.

In this journal I accepted the role of mother for my homeroom class. Inspired by my mother, the Negro Mother, and the many mothers who have supported me in various areas of development, I felt it incumbent to present myself as more than a teacher who merely relays information. Two students, on occasion, even referred to me as "mama-teacher." I felt especially responsible for my homeroom of students and their behaviors as they had been assigned to my class. Even when they were in special area classes such as music, art, physical education, and

Spanish, I was concerned about their learning and behaviors. I was vested in the progress of my students and felt that they were a reflection of me.

I embrace the position of mothering as a divine calling. For me, being a mother is of utmost significance. It is a governing subjectivity of my life, directing my daily activities and routines. My reflections on practice were sometimes interrupted by considerations of my children. As I reflected upon the following classroom noticing involving a male student, I consider my relationship with my own biological sons.

Journal: 4/22/2014

I looked at Singa today and saw the pain coming from neglect and betrayal. He truly believes his mother doesn't want him. And that's why she sent him to live with a family member. I actually saw past the ill-behavior and academic deficit. I caught a glimpse of E.J. and Xyon- my boys. What separates him from them? Could they ever be him? Could he ever be them? I am not his mama…I am his teacher. Am I the difference for all three of them? I must make some difference. The accountability is huge. I can't tuck him in at night and make sure he comes to school with a wash faced, brushed hair, and in clean clothes. I can make sure he knows sight words, and gains (at least) basic problem solving skills. I can show him more civility and patience. Today he answered a few more questions and responded positively (engaged, tracking print, highlighting print, eye contact with me, smiles) to guided reading using the Level A SRA.

This noticing inspired me to become more nurturing and patient with my male students, particularly the one discussed in this entry. I found that images of my biological children arose in my interactions with my students. Furthermore, I realized that each of my students was accus-

tomed to a mothering style that may have been unlike my mothering style. My goal, then became, not to make hasty judgments or assumptions about my students' mothers and their parenting styles. Rather my goal became to learn about students' backgrounds, including home life and relationships with parents, and to use that knowledge to make sense of their interactions and behaviors in class.

Daughter

When I was a child, my parents consistently admonished me against whispering. My mother was very adamant about how whispering can make others feel excluded, mocked, and uncomfortable. As a mother, special education teacher, and mentor to others, she was very sensitive to creating safe environments for learning and nurturing. As I grew up, my home was full of open conversation, inclusion, and trust. Whispering was associated with deceit, secrecy, or exclusion. I can remember her asking, "What is it that you don't want me to hear and why?" These early indoctrinations about whispering were evident in how I function as a teacher desiring to create community in which children feel included, esteemed, and safe.

Journal: 3/31/2014

> Too much whispering. Why all the whispering? My little girls are whispering too much for my liking. About 4-5 times today I stopped a whisper conversation. Reminds me of how mama alerted me early on that whispering is disrespectful…normally means that someone is saying something that should not be said, something that would be hurtful if heard. My students are overly critical of each other. Sometimes outright mean to each other. Calling each other names and teasing about their clothes and family. Maybe the whispering is harmless. But my gut says otherwise.

The daughter subjectivity emerged in this study because so many of the lessons taught to me by my parents continued to resonate in my adult life. I found that, even in my professional practice, I maintained many of the same beliefs and practices that my parents used for management, discipline, character development, and academic training. I believe that I used these practices, in part, because that's my indoctrination from childhood, and in part because I believe them to be effective practices based on how they impacted my life. However, through reflection, I have become aware that the assumption that what benefitted me will also benefit my sisters is unfounded and devaluing of practices that my students' parents use that are different than what I am accustomed.

Christian

My Christian identity was most present in the forthcoming noticing. While I did not use this incident as a time to proselytize or assert my belief in God, I did not affirm that each student had a right to believe as he chose. I was inwardly stirred to hear a male student assert Zeus' omnipotence over God. That stirring reminded me of how protective I am of my spiritual beliefs and faith, even in the presence of second graders. At the same time I, the teacher and scholar, was inspired to listen to my otherwise low performing student articulate and defend his understanding and acceptance of Greek mythology with boldness and tenacity.

Journal: 4/16/2014

We were reading Super Storms. This passage is teaching about various weather systems, their causes and effects, and their characteristics. Two male students began to debate who had more power and who controlled the world, including the weather.

"God made everything."

"You can't say dat about da wedda. Zeus got power too. I learned about him in the summer camp."

I refused to say anything. Was really interested to see where it was going. These are two of my "lowest" students. I had no idea that Doug could discuss Zeus. Dugan looked at me for support in his God claims. I gave a subtle smile (probably a modest look of approval) and continued with my instruction. While I wanted to support him, share in one of the few times we could peacefully "co-exist"/connect, I chose to remain silent. Yet I must admit to smiling on the inside. Wanting to pull out the Good Book and proclaim Genesis, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth."

This entry presents a subtle way in which my Christian voice operated in my practice. By allowing the debate to play out I gave the students the opportunity to voice and defend their positions. However, inwardly, I was sensitive to the claim that creation occurred differently than what I accepted as truth according to Biblical teaching. This sensitivity caused me to inwardly agree with the student who shared my belief about creation. I was careful not to openly discredit his belief; however, I am not certain if my facial expressions and body language did not indicate my approval or disapproval of either position.

Wife

In the following entry I reflected over the events occurring during a reading period. However, my reflections were interrupted by a previous conversation with my husband. I connect this entry with my identity as wife as much of this reflection emerged out of my relationship with my husband, his Ghanaian background, and my connection with that culture. During a previous visit to my classroom, my husband juxtaposed schooling in the United States with schooling in

Ghana. His comments echoed in my reflections and challenged not only my instructional practices, but also my beliefs on how children learn.

Journal: 4/18/2014

I am looking at my class. They are engaged in math centers. One group is playing the main idea board game, another group is playing vocabulary Pictionary, and another group is playing sight word bingo. I have a group with me for guided reading, and a group is doing literacy games on the computer. They look engaged and seem to be enjoying. I am not chastising anyone. I hear laughter. I see smiles. Some are sitting while others are standing. No horse playing or jesting. Right now I don't care to figure it out. They all look happy at this moment. I am delighted. But I can't help hearing my husband's voice echoing "Kids here don't know if they are working or playing. School is different at home. Kids sit and learn. They have no choice." In my mind, I saw the kids in school in Ago-go Ghana. I felt their intensity and dedication. Their refusal to fail. Few, if any, learning amenities compared to what we have. No games. No frills. The teachers gave instruction and the kids received instruction. A school leader who is American even discouraged my use of music during an English lesson. She said that in America we have to build in extra things in our teaching to engage and manage our kids. She went on to explain how the extras were not needed at her Ghanaian school because the students had such a strong and tenacious work ethic. Play was clearly play. Work was clearly work. I was proud of the work ethic. I was proud of what I witnessed. Even slightly envious. My husband's words challenge me. Whenever we play games or do some engaging activity I try to ensure that the students understand and can communicate the learning goals and purpose of the activity. Some still think they are playing and that's okay.

As the wife of a Ghanaian, I am frequently reminded of how Ghanaian culture differs from American culture. I am excited by these differences and do not elevate one culture over the other. However, through this entry, I realized that my wife subjectivity, filtered into my practice. I used reflection to make meaning of this situation by deliberating on the structure and function of schools relative to the social and economic climate of each country. As the social and economic order of each country differs, so does the schooling and teaching practices. Initially, I was slightly insulted by my husband's suggestion that my teaching was little more than overly zealous play. However, his words caused me to step back and consider my practice from another lens, a cultural lens. Initially, it was a challenge to do this without purporting one system as more progressive than the other. In the end, I tried to reconcile an unwavering esteem and support for educational practices in my husband's country with allegiance to a teaching practice in my native country.

This reflection inspired my writing of the following poem, which presents my reflections on the use of learning centers and differentiated instruction to engage students who do not readily engage with more traditional approaches to learning and instruction.

Appalling Fun

Seems we did little work today
Many games and lots of play
Enthusiasm for a new way of learning
All the excitement left them yearning
Puzzles, riddles, puppets, and races
Matching cards, projects, and chases
Manipulatives of every kind

Stimulating the eager mind

Hands on tasks touched all the senses

No dry textbooks full of pretenses

Nothing to memorize or recall

Voices of tradition we did appall

Today we played to learn a while

All went home with a different smile

And so it seems no schoolwork was done

Oh yes it was and learning was fun

Technorational

The following noticings show that my identity as professional educator is layered with both technicist views, as well as views that seek to counter such practices. These reflections carry a tone that is both apologetic and despaired. The reflective entry indicates my acceptance and reliance of testing outcomes as an indication of academic progress. It also revealed the recognition and frustration that regardless of my efforts and use of varied instructional strategies, I may not be able to meet all of the academic and developmental needs of each of my students. Essentially, these reflections depict my rationalistic views of grading systems and performance data as they are challenged by my reflective practice.

Journal: 4/15/2014

I feel heavy with the scores…the data shows absence of academic progress. I am stirred.

Yes, I do subscribe to the scores as one measure of aptitude. I lie when I pretend that the scores don't matter to me. My heart sinks when the data reflects that my kids aren't learning. That I am not teaching…not doing what I was contracted to do. Not doing what I

know how to do. Bothered by what it suggests about them and about me. The scores on last week's math and reading tests are shaming. Eleven F's. I know all kids can learn, but sometimes I wonder if I can teach all kids. My kids seem to have needs beyond me. Perhaps, this is my epiphany-the a-ha moment in which I realize that I have aggrandized my own scope and depth. There is life beyond me. They do live beyond me, outside of me. Yet in still I hear Mama's challenge: "You haven't tried everything. There's more. Find it. Look and look again. You're the professional. The problem is not theirs. It's yours."

Although this reflection represents my desire for my students to perform with mastery on school tests, it also reveals how much value I, as teacher, place on test scores as a measure of successful teaching and learning. Technorationalism is apparent as I present a defeatist posture in the wake of failing scores. In this entry the failing test scores cause me to question my own teaching competencies and abilities rather than the larger social structure, which perpetuates testing as the most significant measure of a teacher's effectiveness. In fact, I show my participation in that larger structure. In the end, my mother, a retired teacher and principal, now serving as a consultant for turn-around schools in urban communities, challenged my pending despair. She charged me with the task and responsibility of finding meaningful and effective ways to teach my students and create opportunities for their success. This entry inspired my writing of the following poem in which I attempt to reconcile my tensions of operating in technorationalism with my desire to improve my instruction and student learning.

Warrior Teacher

Becoming numb to failure

Such a dangerous place to be

Outcomes below seventy

I record with regularity

On the verge of accepting

This is just how it is

Repeated failure on every task, test, and quiz

This is no fault of my own

I planted seeds

They've just not grown

I did the very best I could

Symptoms of teaching in the hood

It should pain my heart and perplex my mind

To see progress on the decline

Where has gone my sense of urgency

To intervene with strategic contingency

I'm afraid of a lost conviction

This narrative I declare fiction

So let this poem become a prayer

Take me back to hopeful despair

The press to do whatever they need

To make sure my children succeed

God remove this undignified anesthesia

And let arise a warrior teacher

Etiquette

My etiquette-self became very apparent one day as I reflected on the issue of gum chewing in the classroom. It should be noted that as a school rule, gum chewing is unacceptable. In a larger social context, gum chewing is not indicative of social grace and etiquette. Thornberg (2007) asserts that students place little value on rules of etiquette as these rules are "difficult to explain and justify" (p. 421) and "make sense of" (p. 421) as compared to relational rules that protect and safeguard individuals. My opposition to gum chewing was indicative of the technicism that I am critiquing, as well as in direct conflict with my belief about the different learning styles and needs of individual children. I considered how gum chewing, clearly not endangering to others, may have been an activity that comforted my student and supported focused engagement.

Journal: 3/20/2014

Why do I pretend to care about gum chewing so much? Is it really rude? Distracting? Tacky? Actually unless she is popping the gum and blowing bubbles who cares…unless it bothers other students? But it helps her to focus apparently. Chew-pop-chew. She is in the zone. Reminds me of the movie, Akeelah and the Bee. Who told Akeelah that her rhythmic tapping was bothersome? It actually helped her to become a national spelling bee winner. To be honest, it actually helps you/me. I often remember things by connecting a rhythm or song to them. Not gum chewing, but maybe the same dynamic. I guess my ranting and raving about the "inappropriateness" of gum chewing and how a "young lady doesn't smack gum" in the classroom is unfounded and one-sided, grounded in the delusion of social grace and rationalism. Perhaps even harmful. It does not have to be a

social no-no. Chill out. Just explain to her how and why gum chewing may be frowned upon by some. Explain context. Set some parameters for gum chewing. Let her work.

This entry details how my etiquette self promoted the expectations of social grace that frowns upon gum chewing. My opposition to the gum chewing was not based on a more substantive rationale such as dental health and the sugar content of gum. Rather it was based on my perceptions of the inappropriateness of gum chewing in a second grade class. While I don't practice chewing gum in a professional, academic, religious, or formal setting, I initially neglected to consider the student's gum chewing as a soothing and calming mechanism. She disturbed no one and continued to work diligently even as she chewed the gum. As I reflected on this gum chewing I realized that schooling and learning can cause anxiety for many students for various reasons. Students find ways to self soothe. This instance of gum chewing continued to play out in different ways with different students. I opted for a case by case response to gum chewing.

Discussion of Emergent Subjectivities

According to van Woerkom (2010), most theories on reflection carry a "rationalistic bias" (p. 347) and treat emotions and subjective sensitivities as subversive to the objectivity needed to make meaning. In contrast to this rational bias in reflective theories, and in alignment with Fenwick's (2000) deconstruction of reflective practices in adult education, it was apparent that emotions, values, and subjectivities were powerfully informative in my reflective practice. Prior to collecting data I considered the scope of my subjectivities, which subjectivities might emerge, and ways in which they might present themselves. When I reviewed my journal noticings, I was surprised, somewhat dismayed, to find that my musician subjectivity lacked the resounding presence I had anticipated. I believed that my musician subjectivity would be loud and

center, ensuring I offered creative instruction, cultural relevance, differentiated learning, and student engagement opportunities that may be restricted by technicism. In fact, it was my musician self that formed the founding desire for this research. Yet, in analysis, it was absent. In contrast, my technorational subjectivity presented a substantial voice in my journal reflections. The absence of my musician voice and the overt presence of my/the technorational voice conveys two fundamental aspects of my practice: First, I, consciously and unconsciously, participated in technorationalism and its assessment of what constitutes teaching and learning. Second, although I believed conceptually in the relevance and impact of using music as a pedagogical tool, my practice did not show a formidable integration of music. My heart and my mind, my philosophy and my practice, were not aligned. Within the school setting, permeating through the door of my classroom, technorationalism in many ways absconded my passion and infiltrated my practice.

As I continued to learn from my emotive reflections, I was not compelled to temper them in fear that they would subvert my meaning-making process and disable me from considering alternate possibilities. My experiences aligned with the thoughts of van Woerkom: "Instead of passive or involuntary responses to the world, emotions should be seen as ways in which we engage actively and even construct the world" (p. 347). I believe that my emotional involvement with my journal writing and reflective practice helped me to consider my students and myself through a breadth that extends beyond the neutrality of mere technicism. Through such reflections, I was moved to write the following poem, in which multiple subjectivities spoke out. The poem reveals my own frustration, confusion, inadequacy, insecurity, and hope as I consider my students' academic growth, and my impact on that growth.

The examination of my subjectivities also illustrated that my subjectivities did not function in isolation, but were often intermingled, at times speaking as one and at other times speaking discordantly. My subjectivities presented themselves to varying degrees based on the context of a noticing, as well as my interpretation of that noticing. For example, my Black woman voice could speak out in a noticing dominated by my etiquette voice. My Black woman's perception and interpretation of the noticing sometimes countered that of my etiquette self, based on her understanding of culture and context. Furthermore, my journaling and reflective notes indicated how my emotions and sensitivities function in practice. I found that each of these subjective identities had a voice with a distinct way of presenting themselves. For example, the Black mother's voice and the etiquette voice were distinctively different in their responses to student misbehavior. The Black mother's voice, while nurturing, employed a more adamant, emotive, and direct tone for admonishment and consequence. Adversely, the voice of the etiquette self was more soft-spoken and tempered in response to undesired student behavior. As my subjective voices responded to noticings, instances of internal disharmony among my subjective voices resulted in stifled external actions and responses as I placated how to reconcile inner tensions. Determining which voice(s) would govern my actions was particularly challenging in practice as many of my decisions involving students, needed to be made immediately. Initially, I was perplexed and sometimes even bothered by tensions between my subjective identities, because it made me feel inconclusive and indeterminate. However, as I reflected upon my data, I realized that inner tensions and disharmony provoked me to use multiple perspectives and consider alternate possibilities for practice. I wrote the following poem to express how these subjectivities created inner tension and how I attempted to resolve the tension.

The Call

Sometimes I'm not sure of what I am

Servant or employee

Divine assignment, contract signee

Navigating the tensions of being both

The technical background, the call from on High

Education reform, spiraling out of control

The common core already under scrutiny

A new set of rules, so many to appease

Am I the problem or the solution?

Torn between being rational or being real

Not sure if they are different or one in the same

The new inventions and strategies

There's nothing new under the sun

Whatever they say, it's already been done

I am accountable to the powers that be but

My Master says, "Do it as if unto Me."

Each subjective voice above emerged in my noticings. Individually and in concert they informed how I reflected and how I responded. I found, as Fenwick (2000) theorized, that my body, my self, and my emotions –embodied in these seven subjective voices, played a foundational role in my reflective practice. These subjectivities also informed, unconsciously, prior to my awareness of their informative role, the parameters I set on my reflective practice in this research project. Below, I discuss boundaries.

Parameters of Reflection

The only criterion that I stipulated for this research was that I would reflect on interactions and situations that occurred with me and my students during my practice. In order to address my research question, I purposely did not predetermine or stipulate additional criteria or target areas for my reflective practice. I found it difficult to compartmentalize aspects of practice as many of my noticings encompassed multiple elements of my practice. I found that I although my noticings were captured in my classroom, my reflective practice extended beyond the classroom, and was often influenced by the context I which I chronicled those reflections. This, in fact, expanded the power of reflection to consider a noticing from multiple perspectives. Much of the research on teacher reflection (Edwards, 1994; Lyon, 2011; Marcos, Miquel, & Tillema, 2009) emphasizes reflecting on assessment, academic learning, and performance, and Ellison (2008) notes the criteria for reflection is often determined by administrators or teacher mentors in order to facilitate teacher collaboration, professional learning, and mentoring. Technical rationalism underpins one's treating reflection as merely a means for deliberation on how a student measures against a norm and how the practitioner attains the norm for self and students. Furthermore, such research shows marginal consideration for outside elements and factors – such as culture, economics, and home life – that affect student behavior. I find this problematic and thus turn to Connell (2013), who notes,

> Reflection has not in fact provided an alternative to technical rationalism. Instead, the concept has been commandeered to support the status quo. Very often, the focus of reflection is not so much on the experience of teachers in classrooms and schools, but rather on how successfully a curriculum or teaching method has been replicated. (p. 7)

During this study, I found that my teaching practice was multilayered and that my considerations included, but were not restricted to, issues of pedagogy, economics, culture, home life, and student behaviors. By not framing criteria prior to the research, I allowed my noticings to emerge instinctively, without being restricted or contrived, and only provoked by the sensitivities and provocations of my subjective identities. The following journal noticings illustrate how my reflections are multilayered, representing a wide range of topics: teacher obligations, perceptions of the students, pedagogy and curriculum, as well as socioeconomic nuances of the school community.

Journal: 3/18/2014

Seems like I never stop reflecting…just sometimes too tired to write it down or maybe hesitant and careful to admit on paper what my heart really feels. Too many times this year I've looked at my students – black boys and black girls – with disparity and shame. I don't know if it is because I am feeling helpless, hopeless as a teacher and caregiver or because I am a stakeholder in the social system that permits their plight. How dare I give up on them? That's not Christian-like, Mother-like, or Teacher-like. The prison is strategically positioned just down the street. The cemetery is much closer…across the street. I should feel shame if I dare to give up and sit them in a corner reconciled to just let them sit as long as they don't bother me or another student. Why are my eyes so blurred when it comes to some and so clear when it comes to others? The class is now quietly taking a test. As they sit quietly working I can see their dreams (as they have spoken them), their potentials. I can see my purpose and ethical obligation to bring it out…Soon it won't be so quiet. What will I see then?

Journal: 4/15/2014

My kids have needs beyond me. My education is not enough. My blackness is not enough. Being a mama not enough. Cultured and world travelled. A scholar. Still falling short. Taught the same fractions lesson 3 times using manipulatives, pizza fractions, unifix cubes, and worksheets. Some still don't seem to understand fractions as part of a "whole" and that the "whole" can take on various shapes, forms, presentations. Do it again…Teach. Perhaps differently. Note to self: Check in with team tomorrow during planning to see if they have same challenges and suggestions.

Journal: 3/24/2014

Flex day- I had an evaluation today. Still get a bit nervous whenever someone comes to evaluate. Not sure what they're looking for and how they interpret what they see in me and my students. Sometimes kinda disturbed that I care (when I know I am wholeheartedly doing my job). Wasn't sure how the students would respond to visiting eyes. The lesson was fluid and students were highly engaged – waving hands, answering questions, smiling faces, asking questions. We did the changing faces activity with Martin Luther King, Jackie Robinson, and Jimmy Carter. Students did well identifying descriptions of each figure. They seemed to own their knowledge of MLK. No doubt they knew him and could discuss his place in history. Yet they were most excited about Jackie Robinson, perhaps because he is a new addition to their knowledge base, or maybe because they related to his athleticism. As we talked about "compassion" as a vocabulary word, students offered examples of exemplars of compassion in their real lives. The conversation took on a wonderful energy with hands waving in the air anxious to talk about who they thought exemplified compassion. Most of their responses extended no further than parents and family members who showed acts of love and nurture to the immediate family.

My goal became to extend their thinking to a more global understanding of what compassion and service looks like. Initially, I was a bit dismissive and slightly disappointed that they had no wider range to pull from as it relates to people who show compassion. My job is to give them the pool of exemplars, to be one of those very exemplars. Develop a deeper conceptualization of what compassion looks like outside of an immediate family. Help them to become more compassionate beings.

Discussion of Parameters of Reflection

Setting these broader parameters gave me further insights for how my subjectivities function and impact my practice. I learned more about the kind of situations and experiences that stir me and impact my professional practice. My journal reflections suggested that I am just as stirred and curious about the non-present elements and histories that affect classroom occurrences as I am by the actual occurrences. This is problematic and advantageous. This is problematic when there are factors and information that should be considered that are outside of my subjectivities and interpretability. The knowing that non-present elements influence my teaching and learning, combined with the lack of time and capacity to fully investigate their involvement, not only limit the propensity for reflection to deliver instruction that affirms individual background and identity, but reifies discourses that are oppressive and often unconsciously played out in my classroom. However, the advantage of not knowing non-present elements at work in my students is that I was less prone to impose unfair judgments, restrictions, or characterizations on students based on my knowledge of their histories and backgrounds. If the student had social, emotional, or academic deficits, I would not immediately attribute the deficit to any particular background or history, but rather I employed a battery of diagnostics to evaluate the student in order to employ relevant learning strategies and interventions.

Setting criteria prior to research would have required unwavering attentiveness and reflections on predetermined components of my practice and classroom interactions. I believed that emphasis on preset categories at the exclusion of other areas would have limited the scope of my reflections, my understanding of how I enact reflective practice, and the potential impact for modifying practice. Additionally, adhering to criteria set by outside parties, such as school and district administrators or instructional coaches, may have required me to disregard my subjectivities, possibly avoiding areas and concerns of value to the investigation of reflective practice.

How I Reflect

Although the research (Schon, 1983; Feiman-Nemser, 1990; Brookfield, 1995) offers theoretical and conceptual frameworks for reflection, little research shows reflection in practice. There is even less research that discusses how an African American teacher uses reflection to inform practice in an urban school. Not only did I give attention to what I noticed in my practice, but also to how I reflected on those noticings. How I reflected was a finding that emerged as I engaged consistently in reflective activity. As I engaged in reflective practice I found that my reflections fell into two broad categories: In-Practice Reflection (IPR), On-Practice Reflection (OPR).

In-Practice Reflections

In-Practice Reflections (IPR) allowed me to think on my toes, to encounter unexpected student reactions and perceptions that arose during practice and to "adjust instruction to take these into account" (Rodgers, 2002, p. 234). I found that IPR required extensive attentiveness to what was being said and done in my immediate noticings. I realized that in IPR, I gave a quick reflective glance to the activities and interactions preceding my noticing. These preceding interactions served as context and background that impacted the way that I interpreted and responded

to students. Reflective interpretations are the meanings that I constructed from my understanding of students' histories and backgrounds and how those elements possibly impacted the present noticing, as well as my response to the noticing. In analyzing my IPR, it became apparent that lack of time was the predominant factor. This demand for immediacy brought to the fore how my responses emerged from my own subjective voices and knowledge of non-present histories, as well as how IPR became an opportunity for OPR. I discuss these understandings below.

When a behavior issue arises, there is often no time to reflect on response. The action needs to be quick, allowing only a moment or two for contemplation. This immediacy produced responses that were grounded in my own subjective voices and the background information already in my knowing. The following journal entry illustrates this point.

> Journal: 4/10/2014
>
> Gray giggles constantly. Seems like a habit. She is laughing and giggling now. It is annoying to me and seems as if she is being inattentive and disrespectful. However, I recently experienced in a brief encounter, that her dad is a giggler. Perhaps a learned behavior from home. Our brief parent teacher meeting was heavy with giggle responses that distracted me. I just admonished Gray, as I normally do. Trying to be more conversational and guiding, than harsh and punitive. "There is a time to laugh and play. This is a time to be more serious. Your laughing might cause your neighbors to be distracted and cause you to miss something important."

My response to this student's tendency to laugh out loud was guided by a previous experience with her father who also exhibited the same behavior. My encounter with her father provided a context that helped me to make sense of her behavior. Her father's behavior was an example of a non-present element at work in my class. I continued to redirect her out loud laughter.

However, both my understanding of her behavior and my response to her were informed by my experience with her father.

The following noticing was the basis of an IPR that inspired an immediate response, which became a mini-lesson about Ghanaian culture. My immediate goal was to debunk the myths and misconceptions that my students had about Ghana, such as the ideas that all people in Africa share the same culture, Ghana has no technology, and the students don't use pencils. This reflection was not premeditated or pre-constructed as the event itself was a spontaneous one; however, it stirred my sensitivity and provoked an immediate response in my teaching practice.

> Journal: 4/21/2014
>
> I just got a phone call from my in-laws in Ghana. I am telling the class that the call was from Africa, and I am excited. A student just said that she didn't know they had cell phones in Africa. I am surveying the class for other myths. One kid believes that people don't wear shoes in Africa. Another says they don't have pencils. WOW!

The ability to grasp this teachable moment was reliant on my subjective voices and my experiences, knowledge, and connections with the Ghanaian culture. IPR was most effective and relevant for capturing the details of the immediate moment and providing immediate response when the happening aligned with my subjective voices and knowings, as more than other forms of reflection, it delivered reflections and responses that were spontaneous, intuitive, and uned-ited.

I found it challenging to vividly narrate details of a noticing while in practice. The possi-bility of journaling about a noticing or situation at the moment and in the space of its occurrence was often impossible. Thus, I found my in practice reflections were sometimes hurried and scant, lacking in detail.

Journal: 4/2/2014

Students are asking for star sheets. “I’m having a good day?” (They declare and ask at the same time). I am charting progress and behavior for Jay.

I began journaling this IPR but did not give a detailed account of the noticing and my responses due to lack of time. Perhaps this is much less of an indictment against IPR and more about my decision to remain present in the practice, hesitant to retreat even for analysis of a noticing. “The more a teacher is present, the more she can perceive, the more she perceives, the greater the potential for an intelligent response” (Rodgers, 234). My focus on student needs and practice sometimes only allowed me to write just enough information to provide clues so that I could extend the reflective journaling at a later time. I refer to this information as reflective clues. I enacted reflective clues to minimize the tension that arises from deciding whether to leave the practice moment and tending to children in order to journal as researcher, or to stay fully present in practice moment and forego immediate data collection. The following reflection is an example of how I used reflection clues in IPR. Although the clues were scant, I wrote enough information to be able to continue my reflective thoughts at a later time. In this manner, a reflection that began in practice became an on practice reflection. The following noticing represents an IPR I began in practice and extended later as on practice reflection.

Journal: 3/28/2014

Tired of saying, “Sit down”… (later).

I wrote this reflective clue because I did not have in practice time to write a detailed account of my noticing. I later turned this short reflection clue into a longer reflection that offered a description and explanation of the noticing. The longer reflection is presented below.

Journal: 3/28/2014

I hear myself saying "sit down" quite often. I used to be skeptical of chastising students when they don't sit down. My boys, generally, don't stay placed. They move about frequently. They defy the rules of getting permission before leaving their seats or work stations. Literature (Wood & Jocius, 2013; Rashid, 2009; Serpell, , Hayling, Stevenson, & Kern, 2009) about black boys, their energy, their attention spans, and their learning styles made me leery to admonish them. Sometimes kids are up and moving so much, that they have difficulty completing tasks and assessments that don't permit movement and collaboration. But I believe they are capable of sitting and working responsibly when the expectation is set. I feel it is a disservice if I allow them to roam the class without restriction. One day won't they have to sit down, listen attentively, and follow directions or suffer consequences? I was thinking about instances when sitting and attentiveness are critical: work, church, court, meetings, ceremonies, college, military…Of course, not all jobs, churches, ceremonies, etc. call for sitting and silence. Umm. My former church was pretty loud, and people stood and sanctioned throughout the service and sermon.

While IPR provided the flexible grounds needed for responding immediately to the unpredictability of teaching, it did not provide extended time that may be necessary for extended deliberation on a classroom incident. Interpreting my noticings without background research, time, or space entailed very deliberate and swift reflective practice. I was cautious in this regard because an immediate response to an IPR may only consider to the surface of what is noticed, thus disregarding background causes and histories which merit address and attention.

A challenge of IPR is that I did not always have the opportunity and resources within the IPR to investigate how preceding factors and histories, removed from the present, were manifesting and impacting the present moment. Although IPR is fast moving, I believed that I should continue to consider how the past, as well as other non-present factors, might be influencing the present. I found that IPR sometimes provoked me to immediate probing and questioning of students when there was a noticing that left me confused and doubtful about how to respond or not respond with relevance and insightfulness.

Journal: 5/1/2014

Members of the class are reading the story Splish Splash, which discusses how different animals bathe. A student is making a self-connection to the text by explaining his bathing habits. Unlike most of the other students, he readily (almost proudly) admits that he doesn't take a bath daily, but has designated days for bathing. Not sure how to respond. Maybe no response is necessary. He doesn't have any foul odors. "What if you play really hard outside and it's not a bathing day?" (my question). He has permission to bathe if he really needs to.

Unless I had an in depth relationship with the student and his/her home life and background, I was not always aware of outside elements that were affecting the student. However, in instances in which I had obtained knowledge about the background and home life of a student, this information surfaced in my reflections as I tried to understand noticings involving that student. For students and families with whom I formed relationships, I was better equipped to respond in IPR to their needs and behaviors with more informed sensitivity. I found that having an understanding of a student's home life, cultural background, and personal interests helped to

combat the time restrictiveness of IPR so that I could respond relevantly and justly, taking into account elements at play that are not visible. This is illustrated in the journal note below.

Journal: 4/2/2015

Pink is acting out again (talking back, talking during work time, mocking others, etc.). Talked to her mom about her behavior. She's been very defiant and haughty both at school and at home. Her dad died around this time last year. Sure she's thinking of him and not sure how to handle those feelings. She works well independently, loves projects, and library time. Incorporate more of this for her. (note: talk to librarian about allowing her to assist with library duties)

This reflection is an example of an IPR in which my thinking was informed by my knowledge about the death of my student's father. I situated the student's acting out in the context of the anniversary of her father's death. I wanted to be sympathetic to my student's emotions and feelings of loss, yet continue to motivate her academically. My understanding of her learning style and interests, specifically her love of reading, caused me to consider ways to elevate her thinking and performance with project based tasks and increased library visits. I asked the school librarian to assist me in providing increased support for this student, by allowing her to spend more time in the library. Furthermore, my reflections on this student inspired me to write the following poem, which is a tribute to students whose undesired behavior may result from family loss.

Restless Madness

Daddy's been gone one whole year

I wait every day for him to reappear

Be it in my dreams or my imagination

To see him again is my fascination

The way he left was such a disgrace

The look of mourning still lingers on my face

He won't be here to walk me down the aisle

He'll never stick his chest out, proud of his child

I am mad, sometimes hopeless

I toss and turn at night because I'm so restless

Daddy's been gone one whole year

He's not going to reappear

Discussion of IPR

Reflection as an independent practice was challenging as there was no check and balance system, beyond my efforts, to challenge my thinking and considerations, or absence of a line of thinking. I believe that one is not fully aware of what she does not know and is therefore unable to consider the range of alternate realities unless she is challenged by an outside force or stimuli. Throughout my reflections I considered other realities and possibilities, yet even those considerations were within the realm of my knowledge and experiences. However, some of my considerations made me uncomfortable, which helped me to feel more confident that I was extending myself beyond my scope of comfort. Listening to others, such as peers, parents, and students, may provoke me to consider ways in which I may be dismissive and intolerant of other realities, thus promoting the rationalism of which I am leery. I believe that my subjectivities are continuously working and express themselves through interpretation, even as I generate data. I found that my subjectivities set the parameters and limitations for my deliberations. Reflecting independently,

specifically with IPR, without a partner or facilitator, did not impede my commitment to reflection. However, I believed that having an outside voice could serve to safeguard me from overly indulging my own thoughts, perspectives, and assumptions. Reflecting in a group "works to coax the teacher beyond the boundaries of her own limited perceptions by fleshing out the details, filling the missing pieces, and looking at the incident from a number of different standpoints (Rodgers, 240). Ultimately, the challenge is seeing the outside world from multiple angles while sitting in one place, inside of my own head. Regardless as to how I attempt to consider other possibilities, my range of considerations can extend no further than my own experiences and references. Thus, it is important for me to continually and consciously work to expand my experiences and references. I tried to view situations through multiple lenses and perspectives, yet this does not equate to being able to release me and my thought biases so that I can fully embrace unfamiliar possibilities and realities for my students. IPR illustrates the need to safeguard against the possible ill-effects and shortsightedness of immediate responses constructed in practice that emerge solely out of the practitioner's subjectivities. Yet IPR was advantageous in responding in those situations, which aligned, to my subjectivities and background knowledge of non-present histories. It also provided the avenue for continued OPR.

On-Practice Reflection

I frequently reflected on practice. On-Practice Reflection (OPR) differed from In-Practice Reflection (IPR) by distance of time and space from the happening that encouraged the reflection. I considered the setting of my practice to be my immediate classroom, as well as any other space on the school campus in which I interacted with my students, such as the cafeteria, playground, or library. OPR occurred both in the bounds of the practice settings and outside of these

bounds on my own personal time. In the following, I will discuss my practices of reflection both in and away from the practice setting.

OPR in Practice Setting

On-Practice Reflection in the practice setting allowed me to journal about a noticing sometime after an occurrence, yet within the practice setting. I found that OPR in the practice setting enabled me to recall and record a noticing with descriptive language of the physical surroundings, such as classroom set up, center area, placement of books and resources, student sitting areas and desk arrangements. This is illustrated in the journal note below.

> Journal: 3/20/2014
>
> Today I rearranged the room for behavioral and management purposes. It dawned on me that some kids can't handle just sitting with "anybody." They have to be strategically seated. I put Red and Brown in isolated seating with close proximity to my desk. It probably won't help, because they constantly leave their assigned areas without permission. I am trying the horseshoe shape. Although it doesn't facilitate center and small group instruction, it does foster whole group instruction and community. I can better see everyone. Every student can at least see all other students during whole class instruction. I kept three tables for small group instruction and center rotations. Although they are not sitting in groups, each child is positioned so that they have at least one person with whom they can partner for collaborative activities.

Being able to write in the setting of a noticing, even if time had elapsed since its occurrence, helped me to remain connected to the context in which the noticing occurred. This enabled me to visualize and better reenact, in my mind, a noticing for reflective deliberation. I found that in reflecting on practice in the practice setting I was more mindful of how my subjectivities

might be impacting my deliberations. It was easier to recall a noticing as I was physically surrounded by student work, literature, documents, artifacts, and images that served to remind me of the work done in class. I reflected on practice while remaining in the classroom at different times of the school day, such as during my teacher planning, lunch, or immediately after dismissal. OPR in the practice setting afforded me the opportunity to journal from a perspective not impeded upon by time constraints and the conflict of balancing my positions as researcher and practitioner. Another example follows:

> Journal: 4/16/1014
>
> Today is a fair day. My energy is elevated. On a break during a planning meeting. We are disaggregating data. It looks as if students are not learning – according to the test data. I am trying to focus on the child in the middle. The "C" student, who often goes neglected, riding the fence. I have about 7-8 students that are in the gray area of "C." They get by with their pleasant dispositions, adequate work completion, proficient participation. However, I don't feel like I am challenging them beyond "C" status. Constantly reminded of the book, *An Enemy Called Average*. I look at them and think, "You're O.K, you'll get it eventually…not bad enough to be bad." Every day I am mandated to spend time with the below grade level, academically failing students. My underachieving students get overwhelming attention in remediation, progress monitoring, and intervention. However, if I could squeeze more time for the "C's" so much difference could be made. Negligence is unacceptable.

I wrote the following OPR in my classroom after the students were dismissed. This reflection, inspired by photographs of my sons posted on my desk, caused me to consider how

homelife, specifically relationships with parents, impacts a student's behavior and performance in school.

Journal: 4/22/2014

I looked at George today and saw the pain of neglect and betrayal in his eyes. I saw past the ill-behavior and academic deficit. He looked like a little boy and not a hostile little man. I caught a glimpse of EJ and Xyon – my baby boys. What separates him from them? Could they ever be him? I may not be his mama, but I am his teacher. The accountability is huge. I can't tuck him in at night and make sure he comes to school with clean clothes on. However, I can make sure he knows sight words, develops basic problem solving skills, learns more civility, and experiences compassion. Today he answered more questions and responded positively to guided reading using the Level A SRA. He functions best with small group instruction or with one on one instruction with me.

I found that in OPR in the practice setting I was highly engaged in reliving the noticing as it played out. This was a benefit of OPR in the practice setting as I felt more connected to the noticing and grounded by the physical surroundings in which it occurred. However, one challenge with OPR in the practice setting is that I was surrounded by insignias of high stakes testing, thus often provoking my reflective practice to linger in what my noticing and my responsiveness would mean for my students' performance on tests. This is indicative of my susceptibility to technorationalism. As I became more aware of this dynamic I did not desist in OPR in the practice setting, but rather, I became more conscientious about my deliberations and considerations of alternate possibilities and meanings beyond testing.

OPR Away From the Practice Setting

During this research, I also engaged in On-Practice Reflection away from the setting of practice. This practice entailed thinking about and trying to make sense of my noticing in a time and space distant from the occurrence. I devoted at least twenty to thirty minutes to reflection every day. Sometimes I allocated a specific time for my reflective period and other instances the time was segmented throughout the day. I did not maintain a routine schedule or fixed time for reflection. Unlike other types of reflection that I experienced, reflecting away from the practice setting consumed more of my personal time and space. These reflections occurred both deliberately and spontaneously. Both deliberate and spontaneous away from practice reflections are discussed below.

I sometimes found quiet spaces for deliberate reflection in libraries, tea rooms, or coffee shops. The On-Practice Reflection that took place away from my practice setting occurred in a quiet space in my home office or bedroom, just prior to sleeping, or very early in the morning after waking, when my thoughts were clear. The following OPR occurred in my home office. I found that reflection done at home had an increased likelihood of being impacted by my home-life and background.

Journal: 4/18/2014

A student came to me this morning with a stack of papers in hand. I asked her what the papers were. She told me it was homework and that her mom told her to give it to me. I was puzzled because I did not assign the work. She told me that her mom gave her more work because I did not give her enough to do. I wasn't sure if I should take the ditto copies or send them back home. Hesitant to do either. I felt a little offended since the parent knows my homework routine for the class, and the rationale behind it. I totally got the mom's perspective, especially as we move towards end of year testing. In the second

grade I had at least 60 to 90 minutes daily devoted to homework, given by my school teacher or my mom (who was also a teacher). I believe that mom is operating in the best interest of her child. Nonetheless, at the beginning of the year our site administrator gave us homework requirements and expectations that supports only 20 minutes of homework each night for second graders. I agree that students, at least second graders, should not be bogged down with homework all night, especially mundane worksheets or busy work. However, project based work that activates problem solving skills and critical thinking can easily extend past twenty minutes. I have tried to comply with the homework policy, despite concerns from vigilante students and parents about the brevity of homework. Normally, when a child relays a message from home, I try to respond immediately to parents. However, I decided to contact the parent later. As well, I wanted to make sure that the tone of my voice did not any way indicate annoyance with the matter. I took the papers and told the student that she was doing a good job….caught between me, mom, and the system.

Deliberate reflections not only provided me the opportunity to organize my physical space and time for reflection, but to ready my thinking in order to minimize the impingement of sporadic thoughts irrelevant to my reflective practice. With deliberate reflections, I intentionally sat down to reflect with my journal of noticings in hand. Frequently, I deliberated over one noticing at a time and tried to make sense of that noticing before considering another noticing, unless the noticings were directly linked. This type of reflection afforded me the opportunity of multiple readings of a noticing, often uninterrupted, as I attempted to make meaning while considering

possibilities and realities outside of my subjective knowing. Moreover, the deliberateness of reflection frequently gave way to more deliberate consideration of possible ways of responding to the reflection.

Along with my deliberate reflections, spontaneous reflections occurred randomly, at any time of day or night and in any setting. In one instance, in the absence of paper and pencil, I used a sales receipt and eyeliner pencil to quickly jot down a reflection. I later expanded my thinking in my reflective journal. In another instance, having no paper and pencil and being away from my cell phone, I was inspired to leave a voice message for myself using my daughter's phone. This message was a reflective thought in response to a student's sleeping in class. My immediate response to his sleeping was most often severe and punitive. However, my OPR away from practice setting considered how conditions in his home that might not permit adequate rest and sleep for the student. This finding supports Brookfield's (1995) assertion that reflection provides the opportunity to consider alternate possibilities and realities that may not be immediately accessed. This ability to access, that which is not easily accessible, was more frequent in OPR than IPR, and one of the benefits of OPR.

In another instance, I experienced spontaneous reflection in a church setting. As I was very engaged in the proceedings of the church service, I was surprised by the surfacing of reflective thoughts of a student. This was not a deliberate time for reflection on my practice; rather, it was a spontaneous emergence of reflective thoughts that occurred during my direct involvement with a context outside of practice. Furthermore, it showed the power of reflection to transcend contextual and structural bounds.

Journal: 4/27/2015

> Sittin' in church feeling some kind of way. Last week one of my students said he wanted to come to church with me. For some reason he doesn't like the church that his family is attending. Initially, I was excited and saw it as an opportunity to show him another side of me. Then fear and skepticism set in. I was/am too leery to bring him with us. Thinking about all that could go wrong when a teacher brings a student into her personal space. I don't want to take any chances that could adversely affect my family, my career, my good standing. Hypocrisy or wisdom? Maybe a bit of both. Wondering where he is and what he's doing right now.

Although this reflection emerged spontaneously, it became the impetus for deliberate consideration of how my Christian subjectivity presented itself in and through my practice. I did not engage in proselytizing among my students, yet I did strive to emulate tenets of Christian behavior as outlined in the Biblical scriptures. In the previous reflection, I believe that the subjectivity with which the reflection most aligned, my Christian self, captured it and pushed it to the forefront of my mind at an opportune time, which in this case was during a church service.

Although my Christian subjectivity was present, impacting my practice, this noticing suggested my discomfort with deliberately restricting a part of my life in which a student was interested. Moreover, the emergence of spontaneous thoughts of my student while I was in church suggested that I, consciously and unconsciously, considered the spiritual lives of my children. I believe that his noticing came to the fore of my thoughts in church because that was a safe place for such considerations.

Spontaneous reflection away from the setting also occurred during my sleep, in dreams. I believe that these sleep thoughts were less about the details of an actual noticing, and more about how I was trying to make meaning of something that I had noticed in reflection. I found that this

dream data (St. Pierre, 1997) was more about how my dream thoughts reflected my subjectivities, and less about analyzing the dream to inform practice. Jordi (2011) asserts that reflection emerges out of Christian tenets that "elevate the mind and soul over nature and the human body" (p. 183). The following dream suggested my sensitivity to a male student's struggles with identity and affirmation. My desire to share scriptures with him that affirmed his self-worth and value as God's creation, "fearfully and wonderfully made," extended out of my devotion to Christian traditions (Psalms 139:14, New King James Version). My sensitivity was also heightened due to my mother's ongoing efforts to affirm the beauty and identity of her three African American daughters in a society that most reveres images of beauty that did not readily include them.

Journal: Dream Reflection 4/14/2014

Really fuzzy. Not going to indulge it too long. I saw Chuck in my dreams last night. I saw a glimpse of my classroom, and faces of children, not necessarily my class. His eyes and smile were clear. I think I was tutoring him. I heard his smile. The smile seemed to speak but he appeared confused. Not sure what it means. I am kind of anxious about how to best respond to him and support him. It's not my job to change him. He indicated that he wants to be a girl because girls get more attention. I'm heavier and more concerned than I was willing to admit the day that I found out his desire. Perhaps it's not his desire, but the reasons behind the desire. I don't know the depth of his reasons. Would I be this anxious if he said he wanted to be a cloud in the sky, sand on the beach, or even a bird? In my dreams? (Psalm 139:14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful)

In this reflection I dreamt about a student's conflict with his identity. This reflection indicates my struggle to make sense of his conflict. I did not respond to him in the classroom when

he said that he wanted to be a girl. Perhaps I did not take him seriously and assumed that he was joking. Perhaps I avoided responding because I didn't know how best to respond immediately and without judgment. The emergence of this occurrence in my dream, suggests that I was more stirred by this student interaction than I was willing to admit. I included the scripture reference in the journal because it became the focus of my morning meditation upon waking. I wanted my student to feel "wonderfully made." After this dream, I felt compelled to help him sort his feelings and desires. I did not know if he was simply expressing the imaginative side of being a second grader or if he was in the midst of an identity dilemma. Upon returning to work I discussed the student's comments with the counselor and asked her to have a follow up conversation with him and then provide me with strategies to support him, if they were needed. At the onset of this noticing, I was certain about how I wanted to respond. However, I doubted that my response would be the healthiest and most supportive response for the student since I didn't fully understand the cause of his displeasure. I wanted to ensure that my response would bring comfort to my student and that he would feel valued because of his humanity, not because of a particular gender. I also realized that my response could not be a one- time statement or act, but a consistent and genuine effort to deepen our student-teacher relationship. After more deliberation on this noticing, I decided to cater to the student's desire for more attention. I considered that possibly his comments were not necessarily indicative of an identity crisis, but rather a response to neglect or a lack of attention from home, school, or other living contexts. Not only did I move his seat closer to the front of the room so that I could constantly take notice of him, encourage him with positive feedback, and engage him more frequently in dialogue, but I also made a deliberate effort to increase my positive parent contacts with his parents.

I did not devote much time to trying to figure out parts of the dream that I could not vividly recollect. As the focus of this research is deliberate and conscientious reflections, I examined less sleep and dream data (St. Pierre, 1997). However, the surfacing and impact of reflective thoughts during sleep and dreams serve as a consideration for future research on reflection.

Discussion of OPR

OPR allowed me opportunity to "step out of experience, to allow for detachment" (Jordi, 184). Time and spatial detachment enabled me to consider alternate possibilities for why an occurrence happened and for how I might respond appropriately. However, transferring those mental reflections into written accounts that I could later reference for sense-making and practice modification required understanding and referencing the context of my practice, as well the contexts out of which my students emerged. This became challenging in instances in which I was not able to write my reflections in the context in which they were inspired. I found that writing in a context removed from the space of the noticing did not change the overall account of what I noticed, but did sometimes dilute the urgency and sentimentality of my on-site responsiveness. With the demands of my teaching schedule during the workday, I often had to wait until after work, late in the evening, to write in my journal. Although I was able to quickly jot down some information and return to write more detailed accounts later, I found that sometimes when I wrote outside of the time and context of the experience, my writing lacked details and descriptions. Even more, as I read my journal accounts, I found that writing done in the comfort of my home sometimes lacked the sense of urgency and immediacy as writing done in practice at the time of the noticing. This concerned me to the degree that I didn't want my state of comfort to derail the need for me to respond to discomforts of my students. Nevertheless, when I wrote out-

side of the space and time that a noticing occurred, I devoted more time to reflecting on the instance before journaling and allowed more of my subjective identities to engage the conversation.

Throughout this study, I found that reflection of all kinds could be a highly concentrated, sometimes exhaustive activity that worked best when I had a clear and relaxed mental state. It was challenging to reflect on my practice during instances of physical and mental fatigue, stress, or preoccupation with other life events. Centering myself in order to reflect more deeply required that I deliberately quiet thoughts and energy that, though personally significant, distracted me from reflecting on my professional practice. As a wife and mother of three children, my home and personal life were busy and eventful. Because I relied heavily on OPR away from the practice setting that extended into my home and personal life, I sometimes modified home rituals and family schedule in order to ensure that I had a dedicated time for journaling and reflecting. Maintaining this deliberate time of reflection sometimes required that I physically retreated from my family and enlisted additional childcare for my infant and toddler. Although my family and I made modifications to accommodate my reflective practice, these changes were sometimes challenging to the norms and rituals of my home. Thus, although OPR away from the setting often gave me insight into my practice, it was limited by urgency and personal sacrifice.

I considered spontaneous reflection as a type of OPR. Spontaneous reflection, though sometimes surprising in its emergence, indicated that some noticings, previously left unattended, lingered within me. Reflections on these noticings sometimes emerged spontaneously without any conscious effort on my part to access them. I believe that these spontaneous reflections surfaced because I had not devoted time to consider the noticing from which they emerged. Further-

more, I believed that the spontaneous reflections emerged, so that I could deliberate on and construct meaning from situations which I would have otherwise disregarded or devalued in my conscious reflections. These reflections and the manner in which they emerged sometimes caused me to consider whether there was a higher or divine purpose in their emergence. This, in fact, indicates the power of reflection to stir one's spiritual convictions.

Discussion of How I Reflect

In this research, I conducted both types of reflection, IPR and OPR. While IPR was pressured by time, it allowed me not only to consciously note happenings during the day for future OPR, it also illuminated the extent to which my reflections and responses were bound to my subjectivities, especially when my knowledge of non-present background was immediately lacking. Both deliberate and spontaneous OPR, on the other hand, provided the opportunity for deeper reflection, and a more consciously search for awareness beyond my subjectivities and knowings of background and histories. However, it lacked the urgency and emotional connection of IPR, and it also proved too reliant on my subjectivities due to the time constraints of school and home life. My growing understanding of this discrepancy challenged me to safeguard myself and my students against the potential hazards of my responding to my assumptions. Sometimes, my reflection was based on speculation and assumption more than my understanding of real life experience. I found this most prevalent when I was hurried by scheduling and time constraints. In the busy schedule of the school day and the pressures of home life, I too often found that I was relying on assumptions that I constructed based on my subjectivities and what I already knew of the student. In these situations, I believe those responses were frequently incongruent with the

whole truth of the situation, and were thus invalidating to the student and disruptive to the learning process. In response to this finding, I further analyzed how my responses to reflection were a function of my subjectivities.

My Responses to My Reflections

Reflection frequently provoked me to respond to what I noticed in my classroom. Reflection had the propensity to transform not only my thinking, but also my practice. As my noticings inspired me to journal and reflect, my reflections frequently resulted in some modification of practice. I referred to these modifications as reflective responsiveness. As I reviewed my journal data, I found that some of my journal writing was not only about what I observed, but also about my responses to what I observed in classroom situations and interactions. Sometimes I forwent journaling about my responses and moved into direct implementation of a response. I would then make quick notes or comments about the impact of the reflective response after its implementation. I found that my reflective responsiveness fell under two broad categories: subjectivity aligned or subjectivity unaligned. Subjectivity aligned reflective responsiveness occurred when my subjective identities were in agreement with particular response to a noticing. Subjectivity aligned responsiveness specifically dealt with myself, my students, and my pedagogy. Subjectivity unaligned reflective responsiveness occurred when my subjective identities were in conflict about how to respond to a noticing. Rather than relating it to the recipient of the responsiveness, subjectivity unaligned reflective responsiveness could be best discussed using four categories of responsiveness: delayed, retracted, silenced, and technorational.

Subjectivity Aligned Reflective Responsiveness

I found that when my subjectivities were aligned in their interpretations of a noticing, then reflective responsiveness was most immediate, undelayed by discord between my identities.

I was poised and confident to respond immediately. Further, when my subjectivities aligned with system policies and school-wide expectations, I felt even more legitimate in my responses, as I felt I had the support of the larger school system within which I worked. Responding in a manner that paralleled with the expectations of my school and district lessened the anxiety of decisions that I made regarding my practice, because I knew that the decision would probably not be challenged or refuted. In such cases, I felt legitimated first by my subjectivities alignment, and then by my alignment with the larger system. The feelings of legitimacy that emerged out of system alignment was an indoctrination of the technicism I critique. This finding was critical as I examined myself and my reflective practice in relation to technical rationalism, particularly as I considered myself resistant to the confines of technicism. I found instances in which my reflective responses to myself, my students, and my pedagogy emerged out of subjectivity alignment.

Myself

Responsiveness to myself entailed the manner in which I permitted or challenged my own thinking from within myself. This included internal dialogues between my subjective voices, as well as how I responded to those voices with and through my external actions and interactions. I responded to my reflections because I accepted my internal deliberations as valuable, reliable, and relevant. I trusted myself as a reflective practitioner as I was committed to noticing and reflecting on myself, and as I considered other elements of my practice. Further, I trusted that, through my reflections, I could develop meanings that would improve learning and teaching in my classroom. This belief in the process of my subjectivities' alignment is clear in the journal entry below.

Journal: 3/15/2014

> I am listening to myself more. Really trying to pay attention to the words that I speak, the manner in which I say them, and how they might be interpreted. I practice self-listening (don't know if it is a real term) and reflection not only at school, but it has filtered throughout other areas of my life. Listening to myself and trying to hear me as others hear me is challenging, humbling, and sometimes even stifling. I am becoming more conscientious and accountable to my choice of words, their power and translatability, in various situations. Today I prayed to become more accountable and disciplined in communication in all areas of my life. "The tongue has the power of life and death" (Proverbs 18:21, New International Version)

Responding to myself was not difficult when my subjective identities aligned. Not only was I committed to my inner conviction, but to implementing reflective responsiveness sanctioned by that conviction. As I reviewed my data, I found that I was not anxious about responses when my subjectivities aligned. Rather I accepted that the alignment in some way meant that further deliberation or research on a noticing was not necessary. I was permissive with myself, thus allowing myself to enact responsiveness sanctioned by my identities. The following is a noticing which represents responsiveness that at first appears to emerge out of subjectivity alignment. Yet, it is evident that there is also a working to convince myself that there are instances in which my subjectivities do appropriately align with the mandates of technorationalism. As responding is easier when subjectivities are in alignment, I fear how much alignment is achieved through self-rationalization.

> Journal: 4/3/2014
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> Usually I feel very overwhelmed and somewhat annoyed by all of the test prep and testing that students must undergo, especially at the end of the year. However, today I have a

slightly different and reconciled ease. I realize that tests are everywhere and cannot be avoided. Getting a driver's license, defending your position in a debate, proving readiness for a job promotion, maintaining character and discipline in a trying situation are unavoidable opportunities to prove or disprove ourselves via various tests. It's not uncommon for one team or one person to have the advantage over another in a test or competition. This is one concern that I have about standardized testing in public schools and its impact on children of color and poverty (achievement gap). Although their lives and experiences may, in some cases, present them disadvantaged in the face of standardized tests, my students have the potential and capacity for passing standardized tests- with mastery. What I realize is that I have been offended, not by the complexity of the tests or even the seeming inequity that it offers to my students, but by the trust and expectations thrust on me to resolve all of the challenges, whether academic, emotional, social, etc., that hinder my students' performance on tests. Yet I have been in this career long enough to know what I have signed on for. To continue to be offended by the expectations placed on me is my own indictment against myself. Going to start my own testless school seems absurd. While the culture of testing is problematic, the test itself is not the culprit. No one has forced me to sign 13 contracts…and I am not without options and prospects for other jobs. I could definitely use an increase in salary, but I continue to stay and stand. Why? Because not only am I equipped (spiritually, intellectually, socially, culturally, and professionally) to do this job, including preparing my students for test success, but everything in me wants to do this job.

In this entry I realized that all of my subjectivities want to teach children. All of my subjectivities aligned with the notion that testing and proving oneself, in some manner, is a matter of life.

Students

Not only did I experience subjectivity alignment when responding to myself but I also experienced subjectivity alignment in reflective responsiveness with my students. Responsiveness to my students was the way in which reflection provoked outward conversations and interactions with my students. When my subjectivities aligned, my reflective responsiveness to my students could be broadly characterized as immediate reflective responsiveness, intended reflective responsiveness, and neutral expressive reflective responsiveness.

Immediate Responsiveness

Immediate responsiveness occurred when I was most convinced that my response to reflection was warranted, viable, and appropriate. This occurred most frequently when my subjectivities were united, or aligned, in their interpretations about the noticing. Immediate responsiveness often accompanied In-Practice Reflections, which required instant response. I believed that, based on my understanding of the noticing and the individuals involved, my responsiveness would improve the learning and teaching that occurred in my classroom. An example of this belief is below.

Journal: 4/16/2014

This morning I challenged my second graders to "do the right thing" during the school-wide moment of silent reflection. As I heard my words, I almost immediately thought "that made no sense." What is the "right" thing to do during morning reflection? What I

really meant was, “Sit down and be quiet?” I can’t model “appropriate” behavior, because I say a prayer to myself during that sixty seconds preceding the school wide morning announcements. Every morning the announcer tells the school body to “pause for a brief period of silent reflection.” I believe that the students continue to be loud and move about because they have never been taught what silent reflection is, let alone reflection, why we do it in the morning, and how to do it in a way that is meaningful for them. I believe that for many of them, reflection is just another buzz word or futile school ritual. Normally after silent reflection we listen to the announcements and continue with business as usual. I am guilty. However, I have decided to provide options for silent reflective activity, without endorsing any particular option: *1. Think about what you want to accomplish today. 2. Consider ways to be more helpful, kind, considerate 3. Think well-wishes for someone you know that has a problem 4.Think about something that went wrong yesterday and consider ways to fix it 5. Say your favorite poem or recitation for inspiration 6. Sing to yourself 7. Close your eyes and take deep breaths to calm yourself*. I am going to try these with confidence. I believe that this will add depth of meaning to our morning period of reflection.

With immediate responsiveness, I sometimes considered how non-visible factors were affecting a noticing. I considered non-visible factors to be home life, parent relationships, special skills and interests outside of school, past experiences and background. In the following journal noticing, I found that my regard for non-visible factors informed my immediate reflective responsiveness. The following noticing shows my consideration of home life and parent preference as I responded to a student’s inquiry about Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy.

Journal: 4/18/2014

A student asked me if Santa Claus was real. Then another inquired about the Tooth Fairy. She admitted that she doesn't believe in the tooth fairy because she doesn't get money when her tooth falls out. I was a bit shocked because I didn't know where these questions were coming from. They had nothing to do with any of our content and tasks for the day. I almost blew it by offering a resounding "no." I suggested that they ask their parents about whether or not Santa and the Tooth Fairy are real. My mom and dad played their roles perfectly for years. Tons of gifts for Christmas and coins for every fallen tooth. So convincing that I still believed even when I knew otherwise. The first student told me that her parents never give her an answer when she asks. They just ignore her or ask her, "What do you think?" Perhaps their parents want them to believe in Santa and the Tooth Fairy. Because I don't know the beliefs and preferences of her parents on this topic, it was not my place to give an answer that could possibly conflict with home. I directed my students' attention to our Social Studies anchor chart for beliefs and ideals. I felt comfortable in reminding her that we learned that people have many beliefs and ideals. I encouraged her to talk to her parents again if it really bothered her.

Intended responsiveness

In some instances in responding to students, my subjectivities aligned, however, extended time and preparation were required for the strategic development and implementation of my responsiveness. Therefore, my plan could not be implemented immediately, but became an intended plan for responsiveness. The following noticing is an example of intended reflective responsiveness.

Journal: 5/11/2014

> I believe that many of our students could benefit from a mentoring program. So much of the teaching and learning that needs to occur extends beyond the academic disciplines. I try to help build my students' self-awareness and self-esteem. However, they need consistent and explicit guidance in developing social skills, interpersonal skills, emotional awareness, character, decision-making, self-efficacy skills, etc. I truly believe that my students, especially my boys, need mentors to talk to and spend time with in and away from school. During a recent parent-teacher conference, I asked a mother if her son had a mentor. She told me that he doesn't but that she thinks he needs one. She said that she tried to find one at the church they sometimes attend but has not found one as yet. Perhaps I could reach out to administration, the grade level team, community partners, and guidance counselor to see the feasibility of establishing a mentoring program.

This journal entry represents an intended response in which my subjectivities were aligned about the potential benefits that a mentoring program could have on students. My reflections caused me to consider the possibilities for developing a mentoring program for students. However, the process involved for developing a mentoring program required extensive research, planning, collaboration, and administrative approval. Although I could not implement an immediate response to my reflective thoughts about the mentoring program, I did not dismiss the considerations. I referenced them as intended reflective responsiveness because I intended to follow-up on the reflections at a later time.

Neutral Expressive Reflective Responsiveness

At various times during my practice, I made a deliberate effort to neutralize my expressiveness to students. This responsiveness was primarily directed towards students, although it entailed responding to myself and my pedagogy. I used circle time and carpet time to promote

student sharing and collaboration for community building, social learning, as well as academic enhancement. During these times we discussed an array of topics or engaged in activities that targeted non-academic areas, such as coping skills, problem resolution, and getting along with others. I found that in order to create a safe environment in which students shared and collaborated eagerly and openly, they needed to at least feel that I valued and respected everyone's input equally. Therefore, in order not to express approval, disapproval, agreement, or disagreement, I exercised neutral expressive responsiveness.

Journal: 5/20/2014

Today as we reflected over ways to keep calm during carpet time, I found it difficult to maintain a neutral face. I use carpet/circle time to provide opportunities for students to discuss their real lives, and openly share/articulate their real life experiences. All students are encouraged to share in their own comfortable way. In turn, my responsibility is to ensure an environment in which students feel safe and esteemed. Part of this safe environment means that I must show a neutral response so that students don't feel my partiality, one way or the other. The kids talked about what makes them mad and how they calm themselves. The responses included "cry myself to sleep," "go outside to play football," "kick something," "call my grandma," "play my video game," and "listen to music." As a lover of music, I also listen to music when I need calming. I was excited to find that one of my second graders and I had "music" in common as a calming strategy. However, circle time was not the appropriate time to show isolated allegiance or bias towards any student. Circle time is least about me and about being right, and most about participation and sharing. On the surface it was difficult to show neutrality because some responses showed more maturity. Yet when I considered the goal of the activity I was committed to

ensuring that no child felt dismissed or devalued because I showed bias in my reactions to their comments.

Although my individual identities may have been triggered by a student's response and anxious to express alignment with that student during circle time, my subjectivities agreed that it was most important for students to feel accepted and affirmed and not discouraged by my subtle or overt sanctions to students with whom I agreed. I found that neutral reflective responsiveness encouraged more students to participate in discussions. I also found that neutral reflective responsiveness encouraged students to give honest answers because they were not pressured to secure my approval. If I made a mistake and impulsively sanctioned a response, I gave every child the same response thereafter. If a child had already shared prior to my sanction, then I asked them to repeat their response, in order that they too get my response.

Pedagogy

Responsiveness to my pedagogy was the way through which reflection motivated me to consider, modify, implement, or dismiss teaching practices. When my subjectivities aligned, I was generally very consistent, committed, and confident in my instructional practices. Further, when my subjectivity alignment paralleled with my teacher education and professional development, I felt even more confident, affirmed, and less prone to altering my practice. For example, my subjectivities were aligned in the belief that when students make real life connections to their learning, they are more engaged in the learning process because they can situate the new knowledge within the context of their own lives. In the following reflection, I discuss the practice of allowing students to discuss real life connections to learning.

Journal: 4/21/2014

I am excited about how students are making real life connections to their learning. I have tried to create learning opportunities which help children to not only see the real world, but to increase their understanding of it. I have studied it in teacher ed and professional development, as well as seen it in my own learning that when children see their own lives in their learning then they become more connected and engaged in the learning process. Sometimes I ask prompting questions to provoke children to make real life connections: "Have you ever…? "What can happen when…?" "How do you connect with…?" " Can you share a time when...?" Other times they independently make life-to-learning connections. Today as we read about Jackie Robinson we discussed being a "rookie" vs. a "veteran." Two students, without prompting shared how they have felt when they were the new or beginning member in a class. One student talked about how he felt when he moved to a new part of town and joined a new football team. Even though they were the "rookies," they all agreed that they had not been treated as badly as Jackie Robinson. In math when we did fraction cakes I asked students to share their experiences cooking or baking with someone at home. Although they don't have full command of fraction operations, they understand that fractions are useful for those who like to cook, bake, and make things. (Funny note- One kid said that he can't go in the kitchen at home. So he can't use fractions to cook, but he can use fractions to eat.) I am thinking about allowing them to bring in easy recipes that we can make in class. They will then vote on the top three recipes. Such an activity will extend our fraction and measurement learning, but will also support the social studies content on voting and majority rules.

As here, when my subjectivities align, response flows. However, when my subjectivities aligned inwardly, yet were unaligned with external factors, such as site trends and professional

development workshops, responding in accordance to my alignment is more challenging and stressful, often demanding more rationalization. In the following account of reflective responsiveness wherein my subjectivities aligned, I decided to maintain my use of graphic organizers, and integrate it with thinking maps, although the site initiative encouraged the sole use of thinking maps.

> Journal: 5/1/2014
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> Thinking maps are becoming quite popular. I've been in a couple of professional development workshops about the use of thinking maps- a map that helps students to organize and analyze their thinking. I find that these thinking maps are quite similar to the graphic organizers that we have been using. My children are familiar with graphic organizers and starting to use them with greater understanding and independence. It took much effort to help students become confident in their use of graphic organizers to organize their thinking in all content areas. It frequently seems that in education not long after adopting a system or instructional practice, we boot it out for the implementation of another system. I am excited to use something new that enhances teaching and learning. But I don't want to do something new just because it is the latest "buzz." I have decided not to discontinue my use of graphic organizers for the sake of solely using thinking maps. The bottom line is that they both promote children to think about how they think and to organize that thinking so that it becomes more useful and meaningful. I have heard and read the research that supports the use of thinking maps, but this research does not refute the impact of graphic organizers.

This journal reflection represents subjective alignment because I experienced no disharmony among my subjectivities regarding my decision to continue using graphic organizers for

teaching and learning. I had experienced, too frequently, the usefulness of these organizers to help students organize and analyze their thinking throughout all content disciplines. Rather the tension was between me and the outside system that frequently exchanges an effective approach to teaching and learning for a new trend. I believe that my students deserve to have access to current instructional resources and teaching techniques that will enhance their learning experiences. However, I don't believe that it is effective to stop using a teaching strategy that has proven beneficial to students. Therefore, my decision was to continue to allow my students to use graphic organizers, but to introduce them to the thinking maps, so that they would be empowered to make their own decisions about the strategy that best enabled them to organize their thinking and ideas.

It was not in all instances I was able to respond in alignment with my subjectivities in the face of external factors. At these times, I felt dismissed and curious about the outcomes that would have resulted had I followed my aligned convictions. Though I felt I was accountable, by virtue of my signed contract, to a larger system, this system was governed by practices, ideals, and policies that emerged solely out of technical rationalism. I felt pulled and fragmented. Thus at times, despite having opportunities to express my subjectivities, I willingly signed on to be subject to that rationalism. I often felt it more appropriate to maintain good job standing and adhere to the contractual obligations for the job for which I was hired. Yet, I also felt despair. In the following, I discuss responses emerging from unaligned subjectivities.

Subjectivities Unaligned Reflective Responsiveness

Although I experienced subjectivities aligned reflective responsiveness, I had more experiences in which there was some level of discord among my identities. I refer to this type of responsiveness as subjectivities unaligned reflective responsiveness. Although I was less conflicted

and more confident in my responsiveness when subjectivities aligned, I was more attentive and conscientious in my consideration of alternate possibilities when subjectivities were not aligned. For example, there was one instance in which my subjectivities disagreed about who should attend a behavior rewards party. I took much time to deliberate over the questionable and undesired behavior of five students, as well as how attendance or nonattendance would impact them. Although I was fragmented, tending to differing voices required me to examine the impact of this party through multiple lenses for each of the students in question.

Instances of subjectivity discord required more time for deliberating on and responding to a noticing, because I had to first mediate inward tensions before responding externally. While I, my students, and my pedagogies were primarily affected by my subjectivities aligned reflective responsiveness, I found it more appropriate to discuss my subjectivities unaligned reflective responsiveness according to its type. I found five broad types of subjectivities unaligned reflective responsiveness: delayed reflective responsiveness, retracted reflective responsiveness, silenced reflective responsiveness, culturally engaged reflective responsiveness, assumptions confronted, technorational reflective responsiveness. In the following, I will provide examples of each of these types of subjectivities unaligned reflective responsiveness.

Delayed Responsiveness

Delayed responsiveness occurred when I was especially uncertain of how I should have interpreted a noticing, concerned about the impact of my assumptions, or anxious about the appropriateness. During instances in which my subjectivities were at discord about how to respond to a noticing, I experienced inner tension that caused hesitation in my outward reflective responsiveness.

Journal: 4/10/2014

I am considering ways to promote desired behavior and academic performance. I believe that extrinsic motivators can be good and bad. My paycheck increases the motivation for me to work despite my strong inner drive to be productive and successful. Some of my students seem to lack motivation to complete work and /or behave with kindness, respect, and self-control. I love encouraging and supporting student growth through positive reinforcements, but I hate stuffing kids with treats and candies to entice them to follow rules or improve their learning. However, part of me realizes that rewards and special incentives can be effective in engaging students and fueling their performance. Who doesn't like incentives and rewards for performance? But that can also become an extra expense that affects my family. The inexpensive bag of candy or cookies is not healthy, but most kids seem to like sugary treats enough to comply, temporarily, with rules and procedures for school. I don't serve such at home so I don't feel good about giving it to my students. (Although I have done it.) Nonetheless, there is still behavior and performance, not intrinsically motivated in my students that I must inspire. As well, I believe that motivators and incentives need to be differentiated because not all students find interest in the same things.

I delayed offering incentives to motivate student desired behavior because I was not certain about what kind of incentives would motivate the desired behavior for each student. Not only did I have concerns about the nutritional value of edible treats that many students seem to enjoy, but also about the financial responsibility that my family would have to incur in purchasing incentives. After further consideration and discussion with my husband about the financial aspect of providing incentives and rewards, I did modify my current incentive system to support improved behavior and performance in students.

Although inner conflict sometimes resulted in delayed responsiveness, I also experienced delayed responsiveness because of discord between me and external elements, including students, their backgrounds, system protocols, social structures, and professional training. I did not want to, consciously or unconsciously, impose my personal judgments in a way that disparaged my students or denounced the system for which I had a contractual obligation. Although my concern for appropriateness stemmed from a sincere desire to not be offensive or disparaging, I have found that it does present some indication of how technicism impacts my responsiveness. The following journal noticing is an example of delayed reflective responsiveness emanating from discord among my subjectivities, as well as discord with external elements.

Journal: 5/3/2014

Today I scolded a child for hitting another student. The student told me that the other involved student hit him first. Then he told me, "My dad said that if somebody hits me, then I should hit him back. So I did it and I will do it again." At first I wasn't sure if the student was convicted either way about his actions, or if he was simply being obedient to his dad (which trumps obedience to me any day) However, I felt the conviction in his voice when he said he would do it again. While I have heard this response numerous times over the span of my career, today I heard it differently. As a mom of two young sons, (3 months and 17 months) while I would want my sons to seek the intervention of an adult in such a situation, I would also want them to defend themselves, to present some sign of strength, to show resilience to intimidation tactics. However, as a professional, I want children to endeavor to conflict resolution strategies and to tell me before resorting to fighting. The professional and Christian thing to do would be to encourage the children not to fight and to seek my help. However, there is a part of me that knows

my students have street survival skills and that these skills are necessary in many instances.

In this journal entry I was conflicted on multiple fronts. As teacher my duties and responsibilities include protecting students and building positive character traits, such as conflict resolution void of physical altercation. I do not permit nor condone student fighting. As a school rule, fighting is documented and examined by administrators for reprimand. Nonetheless, I understand that many of my students have street survival skills that they do not lay aside when coming to school. Not only do I understand the father's expectation that his child would defend himself, but I also understand the son's adherence to his father's expectations. I did not immediately send the student to the office for defending himself. However, I did document the incident and turned it in for administrative consideration.

I believe that my delayed reflective responsiveness emerged out of my attempts to consider and make decisions based upon alternate possibilities (Brookfield, 1995). In delayed response instances, I attempted to substantiate my responses by deepening my reflective deliberation, background research, or professional knowledge. Furthermore, in these instances, I found that colleague collaboration and parent conferences were particularly useful in developing reflective responsiveness to noticings.

Journal: 4/17/2014

Not sure what's happening, but student body odor is becoming an issue. I noticed it over the last few days. I said nothing, hoping it would correct itself. It has since become more of a problem and distraction for students. I think I know who it is, but not sure how to best approach. Don't want the student or parent to feel embarrassed, offended, or attacked. The student started the year rather introverted but has become more assertive and

active in learning. I want to address the body odor with the student (as I have done with others), but thinking a phone call home may be best in this situation. I am thinking that this sudden body odor may be a sign of a problem larger than just hygiene neglect. Check in with the school counselor and/or social worker.

I delayed responding to this issue of body odor because I wanted to be sensitive to the feelings of the student and her parents. I wanted to collaborate with the school counselor about protocol for responding to issues of hygiene. I have responded to numerous student hygiene concerns in my teaching career. Each response was different contingent on the depth of my relationship with the student and parents. In the case discussed above, I did not know if the body odor was a result of negligence or abuse, lack of resources, student irresponsibility, or another source. As the odor was particularly offensive to students in the classroom, I wanted to intervene quickly. However, I wanted to proceed in a manner in which the student carrying the odor felt unharmed, loved, and supported.

Retracted responsiveness

The retracted response occurred when I enacted a response that during its trial I was compelled by at least one subjectivity to retract the response. I found that the retracted response was not offering the kind of benefit and transformation that I had foreseen prior to implementation. Most often I retracted a response while in practice after admitting to myself that the response was faulty or inadequate to meet the goal as I had interpreted from my journal noticings. Therefore, I stopped its implementation for further deliberation, further research, or for the exchange of an alternate response.

Journal: 3/22/2014

Problem with pencils and broken electric pencil sharpeners. Some students do not bring pencils to class (that's another story). Who'd ever think that pencils, or lack of, could be such a distraction for second graders in 2014? I don't allow students to sharpen pencils at will, because some lack the maturity to use the sharpener without playing and distracting the class. Two sharpeners have been mysteriously broken already this year. We have a pencil monitor, but he gets interrupted too often by other students wanting him to sharpen pencils while doing his own work. I decided that the pencil sharpener would be closed, except for in the morning 7:45-8;15 and 11:00-11:30. So I put extra pencils out that were fully sharpened for communal use. I need to reduce distractions ("lost" pencils, "borrowed" pencils, "stolen" pencils, "shared" pencils, "forgotten" pencils, broken leads). I want students to feel trusted and want them to have full access to needed materials. I invited them to use the pencils freely and afterwards put them back for community use. I thought this would curtail the "pencil" distractions. It's only been 3 days. Students are taking pencils and not replacing them and even arguing over the pencils. Two kids even argued over a pencil that belonged to neither of them. Part of me expected a smoother and more advantageous implementation of this system. Yet another part of me is not surprised by the "lost" pencils or the altercations. To start this as a new routine may be too much of a change for the class, in general, to handle. I assumed, or hoped, they would be able to manage the system right away. It could work if I had time to really supervise and enforce it. However, I am not sure if it's the best system. Now I am considering a check out system. Note: Maybe start off next year in August with community pencils as a

classroom routine and explicitly teach the traits of honor, citizenship, and community responsibility. However, to start a process or ritual without explicitly teaching the skills and traits needed to support that process was my mistake.

I retracted the pencil sharpener system because I found it to be ineffective, distracting for students, and difficult to manage. I had anticipated a much less complicated implementation of this pencil management system. Because of the depth of my duties and responsibilities I did not want to further complicate managing my class by forcing this system on my students. Furthermore, I realized that this system entailed more than mere management of the pencil sharpener, but it required additional instructional support to develop students' sense of honor, civility, and community. In the end, I maintained opened and closed times for students to sharpen pencils. During closed times I passed out sharpened pencils as needed.by students.

Figure 3: Pencil sharpener closed

Figure 4: Pencil sharpener open

I found that I retracted responses that I deemed ineffective within two to five days. Either I instinctively felt that the response was inadequate upon implementation or I observed physical signs that alerted me to retract a response. After retraction, either I attempted to modify the response or I dismissed it altogether. Although retracted reflective responsiveness is a category of

subjectivity unalignment, it provided the space for subjectivities to negotiate responses that could potentially result in response reconciliation. Sometimes I engaged multiple attempts before finding a response that proved beneficial to my practice. Thus, a benefit of retracted reflective responsiveness is that it provided ongoing opportunities for trial and error. At the same time, I realized that this benefit of trial and error could become a drawback if responses are instituted and then retracted habitually causing students and practitioner to feel a loss of preparedness and stability within the classroom.

Silenced Responsiveness

The silenced reflective responsiveness was a response that I was not willing to share with the outside world. I silenced myself in order to maintain good job standing, to refrain from offending others, or to diminish the imposition of what I felt to be an over exaggerated subjective stance. At times, I found it challenging to openly and honestly respond to noticings. Sometimes I felt that my honesty would disparage or offend my students and their backgrounds, parents, or even the system to which I had contractual obligations.

> Journal: 3/31/2014
>
> I had a parent to come and see me today about his student. I was delighted to see a dad come through the door because I most often see mothers. While I appreciated the visit, part of me had a hard time getting past dad's appearance. His pants sagged and hung quite low. The laces of his shoes were also loose, almost completely untied. I have only met him briefly once so I felt uncomfortable in asking him to pull his pants up. However, all day long I admonish boys to "tuck shirts and pull pants up" (school rule). Of course, he's not a student and not required to conform to school rules for students. However, is expecting him to be a model of "proper" dress a misdirected notion? I personally don't

like to see men or boys sagging their pants. Although I prefer fitted pants and a collared shirt, I know that clothes do not characterize the moral fabric of a man. So I said nothing to this dad. I did not want to offend him, nor discourage him from future visits.

I remained silent about the father's dress because I was more delighted in his interest in his student's education than I was offended by his "inappropriate" attire. I realized that my preoccupation with the father's attire, was indicative of my personal bias towards attire, which reflects technorationalism. I wanted the father to feel welcomed, valued, and affirmed in his efforts to be involved in his child's education. Not only did I welcome his visit, but I invited him for future visits and classroom volunteering.

My considerations for the school's tuck and pull dress policy for boys, consisting of tucking shirts in and pulling pants up, as well as the father's attire, prompted my thinking about how perceptions of one's dress impacts perceptions of one's identity. This thinking in turn inspired me to write the following poem that critiques a teacher's over attentiveness to a student's dress, indicative of his community and home culture, at the expense of affirming his individual identity and academic successes. The teacher resonates as the voice of hegemony that has determined what constitutes appropriate dress in schools. In writing this poem, I do not suggest that schools dismantle rules and policies designed to sustain safe and protected learning environments in exchange for an anything goes policy for students. However, I believe that as school rules may differ from home rules, teachers and administrators, should engage students in conversations to help them to bridge gaps between home and school, and to construct understanding about the rules that do not directly impact their safety, but are developed to preserve and promote the cultural norms of the larger society.

Tuck and Pull

Tuck and pull
Tuck and pull
Tuck your shirt in
Pull your pants up
Dress for success
Too many people you need to impress

Tuck and pull
Tuck and pull
You're in uniform
You must learn to follow the norm
There's a standard set in "high" places
Dressing the right way opens up spaces

Tuck and pull
I said tuck and pull
This is a school no place for sagging
Aren't you tired of all my nagging
Present yourself a serious student
Read the handbook and be more prudent

Now young lad what do you have to say
I want to hear your response right away
I'm sorry madam teacher that as you look through your eyes
You see something that you seem to despise
You say I look like a criminal
The message is loud and strong, not subliminal

Perhaps if I wore a dress shirt and tie,
You'd less likely ask for an alibi
To you I am bad, hostile, and defiant
You charge me to be silent and to be compliant
It appears you love to show your wrath
By the way, did you know I am great in science and math

I have visions, hopes, and dreams
Maybe one day you'll see past my sagging jeans
Desperately you want me to follow the rule
To look like everyone else in the school
Desperately I want you to be able to see
In uniform or not, my identity

Journal: 4/4/2014

I am sending kids to the see the nurse daily. One day last week I had about four referrals in one day. Two of my students are making it a habit of asking to see the nurse, almost daily. One of these students asked to go about 8:15 this morning, just 30 minutes after arriving to my class. Sometimes I question whether or not he really is sick, but today he looked as if he felt bad (runny nose and puffy red eyes). When I asked him if he tells his mom when he feels sick he said, "Yeah, but she always say I got to come anyway." I thought to myself why would a parent send a sick child to school? However, I have heard this response many times in my teaching career. When I hear it, I have learned to simply write the referral and send them to the nurse. The nurse follows up with the parent.

I opted for silent response in this situation because I did not want to question the parent's decision to send a sick child to school in front of the student. Possibly she thought he was insincere and simply wanted to avoid school. Perhaps she had no resources to get medical care and therefore relied on the school nurse as an option for her child's medical care. Maybe she had to work and had no one to take care of him. Because I did not fully understand this parent's situation, I was careful not to express my feelings outwardly or pass judgment that would offend my student or his mother. However, I am always concerned when a sick child is made to come to school. Not only is the child unable to focus on learning, but also it could pose a health threat other students and teachers. My thoughts on this occurrence led to my reflective considerations about the role of school nurses in urban schools, as well as the implications for schools that do not have a full-time nurse on staff. As a presentation of my reflections I wrote the following poem, as a tribute to school nurses who provide service in in urban communities.

Nurse Lovejoy

Nurse Lovejoy knows my class all too well

Their noses bleed their eyes swell

Five to eight referrals each week

One so hoarse he could hardly speak

“Didn’t your tell your mom that you were feeling sick”

“Yes I did but she thought it was just a trick”

From a stomach ache to a runny nose

A sprained wrist and blistering toes

When they leave me I feel their pain

When they return they’re not the same

Nurse Lovejoy has the magic cure

Her healing touch and heart so pure

So what happens when she’s not around

Who puts them back together when they fall down?

Nurse Lovejoy not to be taken for granted

A rose in our garden finally planted.

As is apparent in these journal noticings, although some of my responses swelled instinctively, I silenced them because I deemed them inappropriate for my professional setting. If I felt tremendously impassioned or conflicted about a noticing but maintained silence in the professional setting, I sometimes discussed the tensions in what I considered to be a trusted real-ease zone. The real-ease zone was a space in which I could break my silence and speak my thoughts openly without concern for appropriateness or reprimand. The zones in which I could verbally release my silenced thoughts were, most often at home among my family, or among mentors or professional peers disconnected from my work site. In the trusted real-ease zone, my verbal and

emotional releasing of work-related tensions frequently eased my tension. The following journal entry reflects my use of the real-ease zone.

> Journal: 3/28/2014
>
> Thank God for my husband, I know he gets tired of hearing me talk about work. Nonetheless, I have to vent sometimes and some things are best unsaid at work. I am anxious even about writing them in my journal. I just spent the last 30 minutes venting about work-not intentionally, just as a matter of our evening conversation. The last few days have been exhausting, even disheartening at times. Students. Workload. Parents. Meetings. Data. Today I had an unpleasant encounter with a parent. But the escalation subsided when she learned that my actions in a particular situation were based off of school protocols.

Sometimes I felt inwardly guilty, shameful, or even embarrassed that I had responses that I felt should not be verbalized. At other times, I simply accepted them, without judgment, as indications of my subjectivities that needed to remain silenced in my professional context. I found that during silenced reflective response, while my inner instincts swelled, outwardly I either passively accepted the situation, delayed responsiveness for deliberation or collaboration. At times, I consciously silenced myself and deferred to technical rationalism as the safe and protected response, when I felt that my subjective response might have been out of place in the professional setting.

Culturally Engaged Reflective Responsiveness

As my students were African American, I found it beneficial to consider how African American culture impacted teaching and learning in my classroom. I have situated culturally engaged reflective responsiveness as subjectivities unaligned only to the degree that it conflicts

with my technorationalistic identity. These two identities conflict as I attempt to reconcile the technicism that I must exhibit as a contracted employee with the culturally engaged instruction that I must demonstrate as a reflective practitioner. The essence of teaching and learning is the transmission of cultural heritage that is "intellectually complicated and cognitively demanding" (Hilliard, 2002, p.89). I found that because I shared in the African American cultural experience, my understandings and background were useful in engaging students, interpreting their responses and interactions, as well as providing culturally engaging learning opportunities. I found that student engagement increased when literature, activities, and learning videos included elements and images with which students had cultural familiarity.

Journal: 5/8/2014

During my read aloud for the class, today I read *Shop Talk* (Ford, 2004). It was a powerful read. I think we must have paused at every other paragraph, because the children wanted to share real life connections to the text. Even girls wanted to talk about trips to the salon, as well as trips to the barber with their dads and brothers. The book is about an African American elementary-aged boy whose mother takes him to the local barber to get a haircut. The boy is fascinated by the activities and conversations of the barbershop. The grown-ups, all of whom are African American, involve him in their conversations and celebrate his achievements. One of my students, said that he likes going to his barber because "der' is always 'dis old man der' telling jokes and everybody be laughin'." The characters in the text use African American Vernacular English (AAVE). For more formal instruction, linked with the Georgia performance standards, I used the text to teach elements of writing, dialogue, and we translated the AAVE into standard American language.

This entry reflects my responsiveness to the cultural background of my students. Through the use of narrative text, we not only discussed the elements of a story, and the development of

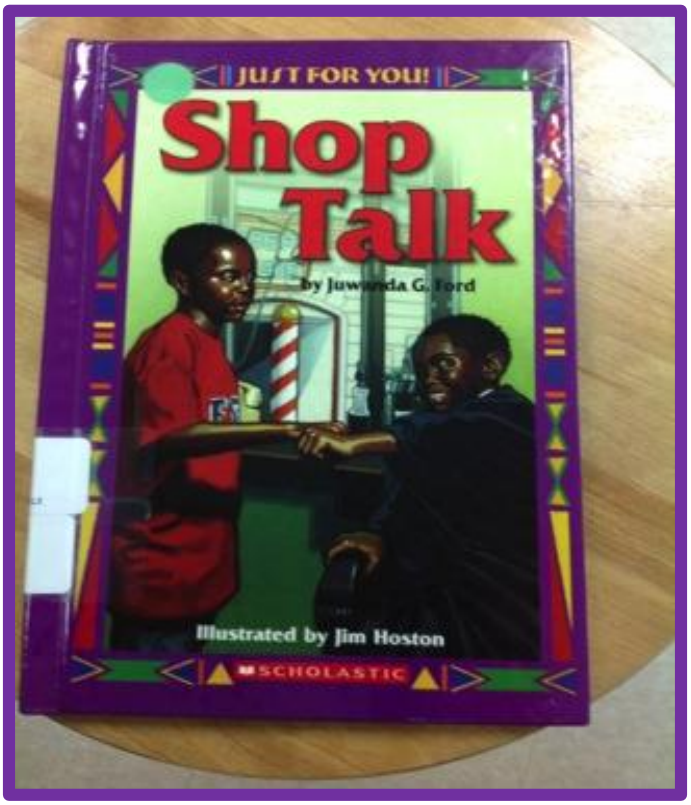

Figure 5: Shop Talk cover

Figure 6: Shop Talk content

character, but also the use of language within a specific context. As a class, we translated parts of the text into standard American English. After reading and discussing this text and others like it, my students gained a greater awareness of the extent of their abilities to communicate and switch between AAVE and American Standard English. Frequently, they would challenge me to code switch when they heard me using AAVE. Our use of AAVE, code switching, and cultural application served as a viable response to the absence of literary diversity in schools sustained by technorationalism. This experience inspired my writing of the following poem.

Coded Spaces

Open your mouth I can't hear ya'

Speak slower say your words clearer

What exactly are you trying to say

What feelings do you wish to convey

Don't only say "dem"

Learn to say "them"

Four comes after three

Leave the "fo" on the street

Put the "s" at the end of a plural noun

This will improve the way you sound

AAVE has a special place

But it's not recommended in the school space

I might sound out of touch like a sell out

Rest assured I know what I'm talking about

You must have the best of both worlds

Refuse the typecasts for black boys and girls

Learn when and where to use which words

Then my darlings you'll soar like birds

So open your mouth let the world hear ya'

Code in and out and make yourself clearer

Cultural diversity is forsaken when fields of education yield to the monolithic mainstreamism of technical rationalism. Prior to this research, I believed that I was a culturally responsive teacher (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Reflective practice challenged me to push those limits to in order to provide culturally engaged reflective responsiveness. I found that I did not merely respond to the culture as set outside of the culture, but rather relied on African American culture as a component by which and through which I could engage and empower students. Disengaging culture not only reifies the monolithic pervasiveness of technorationalism, but also serves to discredit the cultural experiences of African American students by the overrepresentation in schools of images and ideals with which they share no familiarity. Adversely, using images and representations with which students had cultural connections, not only enabled them to integrate their own cultural experiences into their academic learning, but served as a catalyst for learning and deeper exploration.

Assumptions Confronted-Reflective Responsiveness

Assumptions confronted- reflective responsiveness refers to how reflection made me more aware of how my assumptions operated in various ways throughout my practice. I am concerned not only about how my assumptions present themselves to my student, but also about their origins and their impact on my students. Sometimes as I planned lessons and events for my students, I made broad generalizations and predictions about how students would respond and perform on the learning tasks and projects related to the lesson. The following noticing presents my surprise when a student made a topic choice for a social studies project that I had not anticipated.

Journal: 5/8/2014

> Student projects were great! Jazz's project was outstanding. Awesome. I had no idea that he would choose Jimmy Carter over Thurgood Marshall, Jackie Robinson, and Martin Luther King. I didn't expect to get many projects on Jimmy Carter, but I got quite a few. Before Jazz did his presentation I wondered why he chose Carter over the others. As I listened to his presentation I realized why he felt so connected to Jimmy Carter. I had no idea that he lived in a Habitat home- Habitat for Humanity. I had no idea that as we were studying Carter in class over the last two weeks, that Jazz was being inspired and empowered because of his real life experience. He explained how he felt living in a bigger and nicer home. He expressed his view that children need to live in nice homes with their own rooms and backyards. I was blown away with the sentiments expressed through his presentation. He sounded indebted and appreciative. He spoke with a confidence that said that he knew he belonged in his home. He spoke with conviction as he declared his commitment to volunteering. I am glad I gave them options. I never would have known his story.

This journal entry reflects how a student's project inspired me to confront my assumptions about how my students would respond to a learning task. My student's choice to study the life of Jimmy Carter was based on his real life connection to Carter. My initial assumption was not only that my students would choose to research one of the three African American options, but that they would have minimal, if any, real life connection to Jimmy Carter. I confronted my assumption that Jazz, as many of my students, lived in public housing. My assumptions were erroneous and short-sighted. I was deeply humbled by my student's story and slightly embarrassed by my initial assumptive behavior. The following picture shows my student's project- a project that prompted me to confront my assumptions about my students.

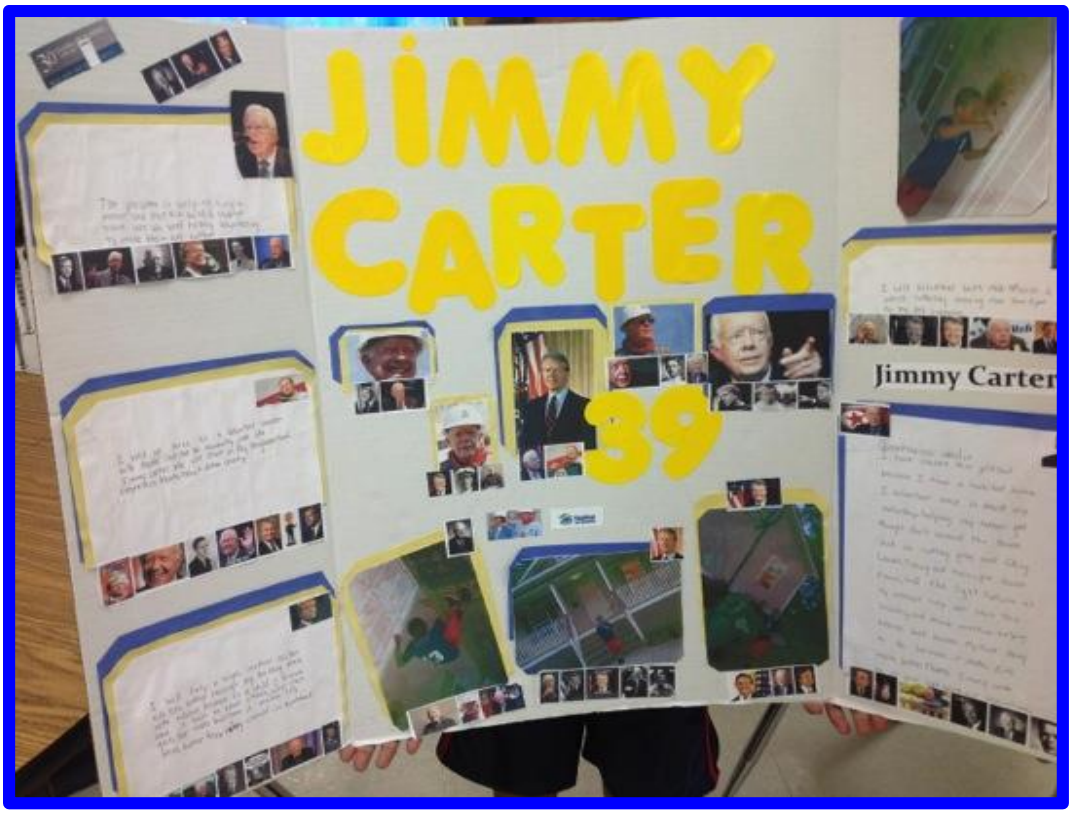

Figure 7: Student project view a

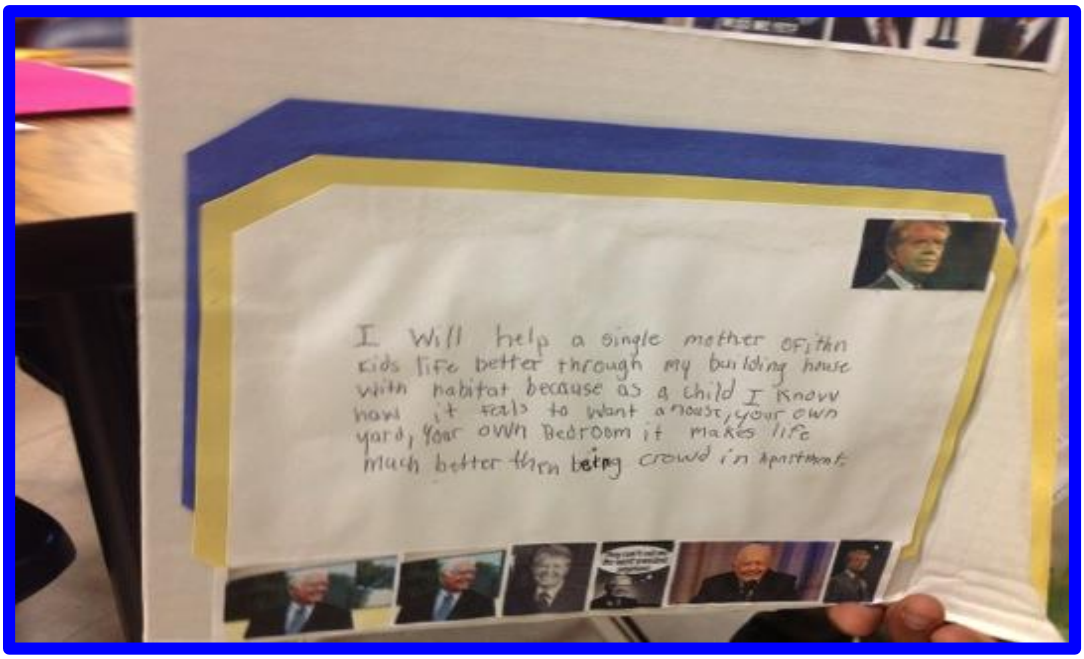

Figure 8: Student project view b.

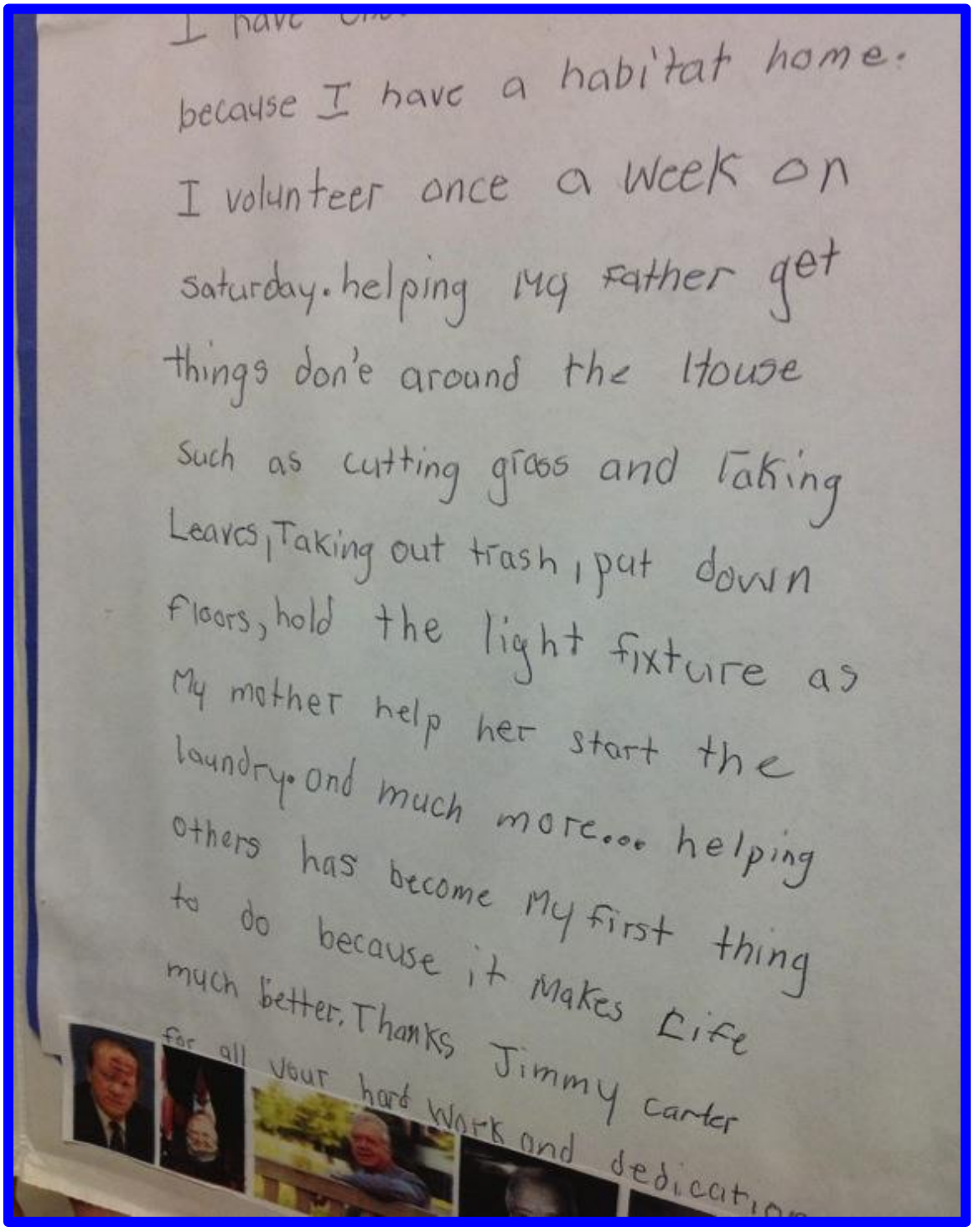

Figure 9: Student project view c

Technorationalistic Reflective Responsiveness

Technorationalistic reflective responsiveness refers to responses that demonstrated my involvement in technical rationalism. Although my research is a critique of technical rationalism, I found numerous instances in which I embodied technorationalism. Not only did I operate in the power of my position as teacher, I relied on that position to mandate or advocate for desired outcomes. The following is an example of how I used technorationalism to influence student behavior.

> Journal: 4/16/2014
>
> You heard me. I am the adult. You are the child. I do not explain myself to children. I will not ask you, no, tell you again to do what we are doing. You are wasting paper, off task, doing your own thing. When it is time to use paper to do your work, you won't have any because you've been doing origami all morning. You should be reading the story of the week like everybody else. It is not time for art or free time. Look around and tell me what everybody else is doing.

In reflection, I found that my primary concern in the above noticing was not in the student's off-task behavior, but my desire for the student to conform with everyone else – not because compliance would improve his learning, but on the basis of complying because I required student compliance to my position as the teacher. I experienced what Noguera (2003) discusses as a teacher's fear of the loss of control of a class, particularly as it relates to students who do not fit into school and classroom norms. With technical rationalistic reflective responsiveness, I en-

forced systematic and behaviors, procedures, and rituals that aligned with the status quo. Although I am critical of sole adherence to technical rationalism, I found it beneficial to develop and enforce non-negotiable routines to ensure classroom management and student safety. I found that when every student exhibited the same desired behavior in the same manner at the same time, management was easier for me. However, I was leery of excessive uniformity, because I felt that it marginalized the individual identities of each student, and it stifled my professional creativity. Hence, I was challenged by incorporating technical rationalism as a component of my practice or intervention, but not allowing that rationalism to stifle the growth of both me and my students as individual thinkers. I also used technical rationalistic responsiveness when alternate possibilities proved ineffective, when I believed rationalism to be most relevant, when I needed to demonstrate adherence to contractual obligations, and when I desired an immediate standardizing response. I noticed that my position in technical rationalism particularly heightened during periods of high stakes testing and teacher evaluations. The following shows the underpinnings of technorationalism as I reflect over a teacher evaluation:

> Journal: 3/24/2014
>
> I had a walk-through evaluation. The lesson was fluid and students were highly engaged. Everyone was on task. During this time I reiterated the "I can statement," then I gave the mini-lesson. I did two examples, and then we worked through an example whole group. Students asked questions and then worked collaboratively on problems. Because I had studied the rubric for the evaluation, I made sure to emphasize the instructional elements of focus for the evaluator. I was on schedule and the pacing of the lesson was in compliance with the district's pacing guide. I tend to struggle with pacing because there never seems enough time to get through the lessons and to work with individuals needing help.

> As I think about it, I made an effort to pace the lesson while the evaluator was in the room, but when the evaluator exited I slowed down to remediate some of the lower students. I gave the evaluator what they were looking for then I gave the students what they needed. It's unfortunate when they are not one in the same. Nonetheless, I feel confident about the evaluation results.

This reflection presents technorationalistic responsiveness because during my evaluation I was most concerned with showing my mastery of the technical components of my practice. While the evaluator was in my room, I was most concerned with meeting the criteria as outlined on the rubric in order to get a good evaluation. I don't believe that having a good evaluation is a bad. However, pursuing only technical mastery to get good evaluations, at the exclusion of meeting students' developmental needs that lie beyond rationalism, does not fully serve children. Teacher evaluations are a measure of my "effectiveness." This effectiveness as a teacher helps to ensure that I maintain the job employment that helps to support the living provisions for me and my family. As a contracted employee of a school district, I am obligated to fulfill the duties as outlined on the contract. These duties emerge, most frequently, out of the technorationalism that frames the climate of education in America.

The findings of this study revealed not only how I reflected and responded to my reflections, but also the impact of technorationalism on my thinking, practice, and responsiveness. I found that balancing my roles as researcher and practitioner was critical to the overall development of this study. My findings were stirring, provoking, inspiring, disconcerting, and revealing. In my noticings and responsiveness, I developed a greater awareness of how my own biases and assumptions were, in many ways, shaped by the technorationalism that I critique. As the literature presents little about how an African American teacher employs self-study and reflective

practice in an inner city classroom, I was not able to align my findings with a coinciding body of literature. However, I did find that my research aligned with literature that presented reflection as an exercise through which teachers can deliberately consider, even through multiple angles, their practice and its impact on students.

This research also revealed that I held a deficit view of my students. I found that not only did I rely on technorationalism to frame what was wrong with my students, but also to determine what I needed to fix and how I would fix it. Against the backdrop of hegemony that sets the norms and standards of American culture, my students were in a posture of social, economic, and academic deficit. I believe that the deficit lies not within any intellectual or cognitive inadequacy, but as a result of a lack of access and indoctrination to the mainstream cultural norms and expectations that sets limits and parameters used for measuring and evaluating intellect and social development. Rather the strength of my students' mode of behavior and performance lies in their abilities to operate in and through their cultural indoctrinations and norms. According to King (1994), the cultural knowledge of African American students empowers them towards a "strong sense of self-independence, assertiveness, and persistence" that is displayed in problem solving, interpersonal interactions, emotional and verbal expressiveness, as well as improvisational abilities (34). I agree with King's assertion that schooling in America, as framed by a Euro-American tradition, attempts to compensate for presumed socio-cultural deficiencies in Black students, as well as in their knowledge, skills, and upbringing that are thought to be faulty and misaligned with mainstream schooling and instructional practices. Prior to this study not only had I condemned any notion of deficit directed towards urban students, but also I was unwilling to acknowledge that I subscribed to a deficit view of my students, despite my contextualization of deficit. I believed that characterizing my students as deficient was malpractice and yet

another way of maligning African American urban students and perpetuating the superiority of American socio-cultural norms. However, to pretend that the inequity does not exist, to not acknowledge the deficit and respond to it as a result of social position and context is malpractice. According to King (1994), the deficit perspective holds that the "traditional Black family, parenting, and cultural patterns are considered deficient, deviants, maladaptive, or pathological" against dominant Euro-American mainstream cultural norms (28). As a teaching practitioner, my response is not to re-socialize students by dismantling their experiences and knowledge base, but to provide context and opportunities for understanding how they can achieve multiple ways of knowing and performing. By providing students with multiple ways of knowing and performing, I am not dismantling or devaluing their current cultural competence and intellect, but rather extending the knowledge, as well as their access to multiple social, cultural, and economic terrains.

Barriers

Throughout this experience of reflective practice, several barriers became apparent. I referenced many of these challenges in the discussion of my findings. Some of these aforementioned barriers include time constraints, access to background information, physical and mental fatigue during reflection, as well as detailing a noticing after time has elapsed. Although these barriers proved to be significant, there were barriers of greater pervasiveness that merit further discussion. In the following section I will discuss these barriers to my reflective practice.

At the onset of this study, I anticipated a strong presence of my musician identity. As a gospel and contemporary pianist, as well as the publisher of an educational music CD for children, I expected this voice to emerge during this research. My identity as a musician, which is critical to my private and spiritual life, was equally critical to my initial considerations for this

research study. I believed my musician voice was directly linked to my practice. However, I was astonished and somewhat dismayed by the lack of resonance from my musician identity. I anticipated discussing how my integration of music in my classroom not only helped to develop classroom culture and community, but also served as a medium of engagement and instruction. I secretly expected to boast of how my use of varied genres of music in the classroom served as a formidable response to technical rationalism that relegates music to music class. I was all too ready to pay homage to music, not only for transforming my practice, but for being a layer in the structure of my research study.

The unanticipated absence of the musician voice posed a barrier that was multilayered. First, I was challenged to acknowledge the faultiness and egoism of my assumptions. In a study that iterates the potential dangers of the assumptive nature, it was difficult to accept the depth of my own assumptions regarding myself and my practice. Secondly, in the absence of my musician's voice, I was challenged to accept the reality of its silence and not impose its presence in my noticings and responses to those noticings. I did not want to insert or interpret a voice that was actually nonexistent for the sake of satisfying my own beliefs about self. Thirdly, I was challenged to ensure that I did not exaggerate the musician's voice to the extent that I devalued the impact of the other subjectivities that emerged. This could only serve to marginalize those voices, thus making me guilty of the technorationalism that I critique, of silencing voices and devaluing individual identity. The fourth layer to this barrier was simply accepting that my music did not present a viable responsiveness to technorationalism. In fact, I have come understand that the use of music alone does not represent a resistance to technorationalism when it is designed to promote the norms, procedures, and standards of the mainstream. This is also indicative of how

technorationalism works to silence the voice of the teacher and discourages her from sharing special skills and talents with her students.

I encountered a second barrier, as I sometimes blurred the lines of my position through rationalization of self and system. At times, I used reflection to soothe frustrations and anxieties that I had about my participation in technorationalism. I attempted to reconcile my frustrations by aligning myself with the "not so bad tenets" of technorationalism. This was a barrier to my reflective practice only when I failed to acknowledge my own allegiance and participation in the system, which I was supposed to counter. At times during the study, I mediated, and possibly even manipulated, my own thinking to find ways to justify my decisions without fully admitting my alliance with technicism. Even my consideration of "alternate realities" was a validation of technorationalism as "the reality." Moreover, it is not uncommon for one to change one's mind based on the acquisition of new knowledge, a change of position or perspective, or even out of sheer dissatisfaction with the outcomes of a previous decision. Sometimes, when I had a change of mindset, it was because I found a way or ways to reconcile myself with the norms and protocols of the system. This is a barrier to the kind of courageous, creative, and innovative thinking that interrupts the normal or rational way of business as usual. I sacrificed voice in order to reconcile myself with a system, in part, because I wanted to avoid conflict and confrontation with other stakeholders.

The third barrier was the difficulty of getting out of my head to consider other realities. As this was a self-study on my reflective practice, much of my research occurred in my head, dealing with myself, as I dealt with the world around me. It was challenging, almost impossible, to consider realities and possibilities of which I had no knowledge. Although I attempted to learn my student's backgrounds, interests, and subjectivities, I was not always able to fully interpret

and translate every noticing into knowledge that was useful to them, because of limited scope of knowledge and time. Although I constructed meanings, those insights were developed, extended, or restricted according to the scope of my subjectivities. Thus, this was a barrier to my use of reflection to inform my pedagogy and deliver instruction that extended beyond what I know whether technicist or not. Although there were instances in which I collaborated with colleagues to develop responses to reflection, during this study I was most devoted to isolated reflection and self-study. Thus, the barrier of getting out of my head could have possibly been addressed through increased collaboration with other practitioners who represented a range of subjectivities.

The fourth barrier was acknowledging my assumptive nature. Although I tried to safeguard myself from being assumptive, assumptions became a barrier to my reflections, particularly in instances in which I had no tangible background knowledge about a student or situation. I made assumptions based on my experiences with similar cases. Assumptions were barriers to my reflective thinking because the reflections were not grounded in truthful understanding, but in my judgments and suppositions, whether faulty or not, as they were undergirded by my subjective beliefs. I found that these subjective beliefs sometimes coincided with technorationalism, thus reinforcing the impact of technorationalism on my students and my practice.

Although each barrier that I experienced was significant to my study, I was most challenged by the themes of subjectivity alignment and subjectivity unalignment. These themes presented themselves as both findings of the study, as well as barriers. Although I experienced the harmony and personal fulfillment of subjectivities aligned, this alignment was problematic because it was easy for me to dismiss any idea that antagonized that peace. It was painstaking to

accept that my inner harmony could result in my students' disharmony, particularly if our subjectivities differed. Moreover, I realized that when my inner harmony aligned with technorationalism, I then supported and promoted that technorationalism in my practice with my students. This was a barrier to my research because while I was a willing participant in that system, my students were unknowing recipients, possibly even victims of that rationalism. Perhaps their rebellion and undesired behaviors were ways of conveying their distaste for being discredited and disengaged through technicism.

In turn, the barrier of subjectivity unalignment was determining which voice(s) to act upon outwardly when my voices conflicted inwardly. During this period of listening to conflicting selves I sometimes became stagnant, unable to act, which resulted in delayed decision making and a loss of valuable classroom time and instruction. There were instances in which I was uncertain how to respond to my fragmented selves. Further, when I focused more on the internal discord rather than the understanding of what it meant about me and what it posed for my practice, I impeded the potential for reflection to transform my practice. Not only does this point back to the barrier of getting out of myself and my own feelings, but also to how easy it was to talk myself into rationalistic responsiveness. Although rationalistic responsiveness did not take away the subjectivity unalignment and internal conflict, it provided an easy out for outward responsiveness, whether I opted for silence or compliance.

The final barrier to this research was the constant tension and pull that I experienced between being a researcher and a practitioner. One aspect of this research journey was my attempt to reconcile the two positions as opposed to accepting them as dichotomous ends. At times, I felt that my practice suffered because of my research efforts to improve that very practice. Because this research occurred, in part, during my hours of practice, I could not forsake my contractual

obligation in order to function solely as researcher. At the same time, I had to strategically pull away from practice in order to function as researcher to chronicle and reflect upon noticings. In theory, it seems that being a reflective practitioner embodies the research component and that the roles of research and practitioner would function in synch. However, finding ways for these two roles to co-exist consistently became a pressing barrier, particularly in instances that required my immediate practitioner response and attention. I would respond first as practitioner and then later try to relive and capture the instance as researcher in order to reflect upon its meaning.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this chapter I first present a summary of the findings as they relate to the research questions that guided this study. Next, I discuss the implications of this study and the impact of reflection on my practice. The implications discussion will be presented as implications for students, implications for teachers and practice, and implications for educational policy. In the final three sections I discuss the significance of the study, the limitations, and implications for future research respectively.

How Do I Reflect?

Not only did I rely on reflection for deliberation and consideration of problems, but also for self-study. I agree with the literature that reflection enables the practitioner to look beyond the surface of an occurrence (Klein, 2008; Bold &Chambers, 2009; Dimova & Loughran, 2009, Ng & Tan, 2009). As this study proposes reflection as a response to techno rationalism, I was challenged to be mindful of how I participated in some of the very ideals and practices of which I am critical. I reflected on what I noticed in my practice, against the backdrop of my own subjectivities, as well as that of technorationalism. There could be no reflection without the initial noticings. Noticings were the interactions and events that occurred in my classroom that resonated in my mind and provoked my reflective thinking. These noticings were mirrors of my subjectivities. Unlike research, in which reflection is initiated by a very specific or narrow focus or by failed attempts to reach a predetermined goal, the reflections of this research were provoked by noticings that emerged during practice (Bartos, Lederman, & Lederman, 2014; Wise, Speigel, & Bruning, 1999; Johnson, Pacht, van Slyck, & Tsao, 2009). Each reflection began with a single noticing or compounded noticings. My subjective lenses determined what I would notice. Unlike

much of the literature on reflection, I had few predetermined parameters for my noticings, as this would have muted the natural rhythm of my seeing. While my noticings occurred during practice as I interacted with my students, my reflections on those noticings occurred also in practice in my practice setting, or on practice in my practice setting, or on practice away from the practice setting. I captured my noticings through journal writing.

Initially, I was alarmed and felt somewhat guilty to realize that technorationalism could sometimes be seen in and through my subjective identities. The more I realized how entrenched I am in that technicism, I questioned, not if I was bad or wrong, but if technicism could in some ways be good or right. Even my attempts to reconcile myself with that technorationalism was an underlying admittance that reflection, as a single response, was not enough to subvert the kind of thinking that defaults to seeing the deficit of anything outside the status quo. In many instances, I used reflection to reconcile and justify my involvement in technicism. I called this type of exercise reflective reconciliation.

This research examined how I reflected in practice and on practice. While much research considers reflection on practice, little research examines how a practitioner reflects in practice, particularly in an urban setting (McCeeter & Dewhurst, 2010; Cavanagh & Prescott, 2010; Fazio, 2009.) My reflective practice aligned with the literature that suggests the use of reflection to mediate the uncertainties and unpredictabilities of teaching practice (Helleve, 2014; Richert, 2012; Schon, 1983). Unlike many of the researchers on reflection (Song & Catapano, 2008; Edwards,1994; Vaughn, 2015), I began my research on reflective practice with no predetermined parameters, except that the reflections were to stem from events or interactions that occurred in my classroom. As I used reflection to ponder practice that I deemed faulty or ineffective I devoted much attention to examining the subjectivities that operated in my teaching practice, as

well as how these subjectivities presented themselves in and through my reflective practice. These subjectivities not only shaped my beliefs of technorationalism, but also about reflection itself. Although I have other subjectivities that did not emerge in this research, I only limited my considerations to the subjectivities that emerged during this research study. Examining my subjectivities and background was critical to understanding how I reflected and made sense of noticings. This sense making process impacted my responsiveness in practice. Additionally, I experienced deliberate reflective exercise, as well as spontaneous reflections in which thoughts and considerations emerged without direct or immediate provocation. Consistent with the literature (Schon,1983; Ellison, 2008; Lee, 2008) my reflective practice was frequently an inner thought process that extended into outward action.

How Do I respond to Self, Students, and Pedagogy?

Reflection, whether in practice, on practice, deliberate, or spontaneous, delivers very poignant considerations, concerns, and inquiries to be addressed in reflective responsiveness. My reflections most frequently provoked responsiveness. I experienced reflections that challenged my attitudes, assumptions, behaviors, and practice. To this end, reflection made me more conscientious of how I responded to my self, students, and pedagogy in ways that promoted student engagement and learning; as well as ways that impeded students' growth, or devalued their backgrounds and everyday experiences. I distinguished my responsiveness according to the way in which my subjectivities aligned or unaligned. Unveiling the alignment and unalignment of my subjectivities and the tensions that accompany each gave me insights on the origins of internal and external tensions. To this end, I better understand the range of my responsiveness. Responding to myself was most challenging as it entailed challenging myself, the expression of my

subjective identities, and even the background and upbringing, which I esteem. I did not challenge myself for the mere sake of challenging myself to prove that I had risen above self-aggrandizing, but rather for the sake of advocating for my students, even if it that meant pushing self-interests to the margins. I have not fully mastered the task of recognizing and restructuring all assumptions to the extent that minimizes their impact on my practice and my students.

Although this study is a critique of technicism, I now realize that technicism in itself is not the culprit, but the culprit is subjugating power. I reference subjugating power as the use of power that accompanies the position of a person, group of people, or system to suppress or marginalize others. Whether that subjugation comes from technicism which treats teaching and learning as a set of one size fits all prescriptives, or the over imposition of a teacher's subjectivities behind closed doors which marginalizes varying subjectivities and backgrounds of students.

What are the Barriers to Reflection?

There were numerous barriers to reflective practice. I experienced barriers such as mental fatigue and personal distractions occupied my mind sometimes hindering my ability to reflect on practice. Other barriers such as my dual function as researcher and subject, time constraints, lack of insights into students' backgrounds, and detailing a noticing after time elapsed became quite apparent early in the project. Because these barriers emerged early in the project, I developed a greater awareness and sensitivity to how they affected my research, as well as my practice. However, barriers such as the imposition of my subjective identities on students, the over emphasis of non-surfacing subjectivities, the egotism of assumptions, the rationalization of self and system, and my participation in technicism required more time to uncover and were more painstaking for me to acknowledge. Although my understanding of these barriers has caused me to reconsider

my thinking and my practice, I realize that these barriers are indicative of technicism's prevalence not only in American society, teacher education programs, urban schooling, but also in my own practice. As I initially proposed to use reflection as a response to technicism, I did not realize how my critique of technicism would result in a critique and reconsideration of many of my own attitudes and practices, pedagogical, and otherwise. At times, I felt hypocritical and held the desire to apologize for my acceptance and participation in the technicism that I believe hinders the development of my students. Realizing that I had not fully circumnavigated the dogma of technicism presented a mental barrier, causing me to question the sincerity and authenticity of my practice and my research. As researcher and subject, I was consistently concerned with my ability to achieve and maintain balance and awareness that enabled me to question and respond to self, students, and practice, as well as interpret those responses in the dual roles I assumed.

Implications

The purpose of this study was to examine how I, as a practitioner, use reflective practice to inform my pedagogical practices for African American students. My discussion of implications is situated with an understanding that teaching practice and educational policy, particularly in public schools, is framed against the backdrop of technorationalism. Therefore, I will present this section in three parts. The first section will discuss the implications for students, the second will discuss the implications for teaching practitioners, and the third for educational policy makers.

Students

As most of my students are African American, it was necessary to examine how reflective practice may respond to their developmental needs in ways that technical rationalism disregards. Technical rationalism touts of meeting the all-encompassing needs of teaching and learn-

ing, yet it offers curriculum and practices that have limited scope for diverse populations. Furthermore, any behavior or representation that lies outside of the scope and standard of technicism is frequently deemed faulty and thus rejected by rationalism. An implication of this study is that students who perform or behave in exception to the standards of technicism may be misjudged or devalued in the classroom. This study further implies that students do not thrive in a learning environment, which offers pedagogical practices that do not speak to their learning styles, needs, and interests. It further suggests that reflective consideration of the experiences and backgrounds for each child is a critical component of developing individualized learning programs. Furthermore, this study implies that students are expected to conform to the technorationalism that governs education in America, comply with the subjective beliefs of their teachers, as well as adhere to the ideals of their families. This juggling act may be overwhelming, confusion, and even frustrating for students, thus resulting in undesired behavior and inattentiveness in classrooms. While the reflective practitioner deliberates on components of practice, not all practitioners have the same goal, considerations, or process for reflection. This suggests that students may not be at the fore of every practitioner's reflective deliberations. Furthermore, for students who perceive their teachers as being right or superior, morally and intellectually, they may begin to scrutinize and devalue their own identities and beliefs that do not mimic those of their teacher. A student's discomfort or unacceptance with a teacher's attitude or practice can only be known if the student speaks or acts out. This implies that students do not act out or rebel merely because they are intellectually or behaviorally deficient, but because they have contention with the hegemony that causes them to be unheard and unseen in the margins of their learning environments.

Teachers

A teacher has the moral and professional responsibility to provide a safe and protected learning environment for all students. This safety does not just ensure physical protection, but also emotional and intellectual. This study implies that teachers need time to think about what occurs in their classrooms and what these occurrences mean in relation to the overall development of students. I have spent many reflective moments trying to figure out how to improve test scores and failing grades without deep consideration of elements that affect student performance, such as home life, background, teacher assumptions, student interests and learning styles, and differentiation of teaching practices. While reflecting on student outcomes is an integral component of reflective practice, to do it in isolation is to dismiss poignant pieces of the puzzle needed to remedy learning challenges for students. This study suggests that teachers should be aware of how their students are not supported in their classrooms and respond to those areas. Teachers respond to uncertainties and exceptionalities daily within practice. In the instance of uncertainties, a practitioner may default to a technical response out of contractual duty, allegiance to technicism, compliant fear, or lack of knowledge of alternate responses. If a practitioner's response is too indulgent in her subjectivities, then students become victims of those subjectivities. Essentially, this egotism functions as a type of technicism and anything outside of the subjective scope is deemed faulty or deficit by the teacher. When a teacher closes the door to her classroom, unless she is being directly monitored or evaluated by an outside agent, then she becomes the authority. If a teacher takes comfort in the fact that she is offering instruction and response systems that beset technical rationalism, then she may fail to realize that the responses may not extend beyond her subjectivities. Even more serious, is that the instruction and responses overly indulge the teacher's subjectivities, to the exclusion of other perspectives and realities. Therefore, reflective practitioners must be accountable to reflective practice that does not justify their actions and

responses on the basis of their subjective preferences. Rather they are accountable to reflective practice that gathers information and constructs meaning that translates into practice that is relevant to the education and development of each student. Hence, teachers, who service students whose backgrounds are outside of American mainstreamism should realize how a sole reliance of technicism limits their ability to understand and support student growth, with equity and justice. To avoid the pitfalls of imposing technorationalism on all students, specifically urban African American students, teachers should be cognizant of how the standardization and proceduralism of teaching practice subjugates sects of students, as well as teachers. Teaching as a one size fits all practice falls short of meeting the needs of all students, as this type of teaching disregards the cultural backgrounds of students (Milner, 2003). Not merely for responding to the limitations of technorationalism, but to protect students from marginalization from any source, including the practitioner, reflective practice serves as a viable means for practitioners to consider each individual student. One implication of this study is that through the use of reflection a teacher can glean significant information about herself and her practice. Reflection is time consuming both in and out of the classroom. With the pace and density of a teacher's schedule, it is easy for her to defer to a business as usual mode of operation. This operational attitude may disallow a teacher from engaging in the type of deliberative thinking that brings about equity and justice in pedagogical practices.

Through the process of autoethnography and self-study I looked inward and outward to study and respond to myself, the socio-cultural climate in which I practice, my students, my pedagogy, and technorationalism. Through this process I was challenged to dismiss, alter, or continue various elements of my thinking and practice. When a teacher reflects on her subjectivities, her background experiences, and how these elements impact practice, then she is more equipped

to consider how she constructs meaning, how her children perceive her, and how they might respond to it. Teachers have numerous opportunities to impose their own subjectivities on students. These subjectivities may or may not have damaging effects on students. As well, teaching practitioners may not be conscientious of how their subjectivities emerge and present themselves in their classrooms. Although this research is a self-study, it is not intended to suggest that I, as teacher, am the foremost participant in my research or practice. Rather, it does indicate that I have tremendous opportunity and authority to impact my students through my own subjectivities, inclusive of technorationalism. Regardless, of the source of the standards and ideals that govern a classroom, students are the targets, subject to preferred practices and beliefs of their immediate teacher. Students may be penalized and chastised by teachers when they do not conform to the expectations of their teachers. To this degree, teachers are agents of power and ambassadors for their belief systems. Furthermore, through these standards and expectations, students are subject to the enactment of that power. Reflection can be used to help a teacher to scrutinize her use of the power of her position.

Educational Policy

Reflective practice suggests a need for teachers to consider the relationship between their subjectivities, students, and the policies established to govern their practice. As contracted employees of school systems, teachers, regardless of their backgrounds, obligate themselves to align their practice with the policies of their employing system. Teachers might consider how policy impacts their understanding and perceptions of their students, thus how they respond to students. The implication for educational policy is that policies are embedded with assumptions about teaching and learning that policy makers who align with technorationalism may not challenge.

As a result, policies may not always be available to enable teachers to justly address the unpredictabilities and indeterminate zones of teaching practice. Policy makers should be leery of creating or sustaining policies that merely safeguard technorationalism in American public schools. Furthermore, they should reconsider how the norms and standards of technorationalism might be reevaluated to reflect the depth of diversity of student and teacher populations. The adherence to technicism even through educational policy, suggests that policy makers may not enact mandates regarding reflective practice for teachers, as reflection follows a constructivist view of learning.

Furthermore, as reflective teacher practice follows a constructivist view of learning it does not lend itself to being objectified by educational policy making that proceduralizes systematic practice. I am not suggesting an anything goes anarchy approach to teaching and learning in schools. However, I am suggesting that anything outside of technorationalism should not be discredited if it serves to increase democracy, equity, and justice in classrooms that service diverse populations. Frequently disconnected and remote from classrooms and communities affected by their policy making, policy makers, might strengthen constituent ties to repeal policies and mandates that privilege one group over another. This further implies that educational policy making and technorationalism have mutual reliance that creates systems, protocols, and procedures for governing schools and classrooms. However, when policy fails to democratize classrooms, even in addressing indeterminate and unpredictable zones of practice, teachers must advocate for students inside and outside the confines of their classrooms. As teaching practice is not static, as technicism would suggest, policy should not remain static allowed to persist unquestioned and unrevised. The implication is that educational policy makers could enlarge their thinking about policy and school governance by collaborating with teaching practitioners, students, and other stakeholders that represent the diversity of student populations.

Significance of Study

The significance of this study lies in its implications for practice. Conducting this study as both researcher and subject compelled me to ponder the relationship of reflection for practice and theory. While there is a preponderance of research on the theoretical frames of reflection (Schon, 1983; Valli, 1992; Loughran, 2002; Milner, 2003), there is less research that delves into the application of reflection in practice. This research adds to the body of literature that examines how reflection functions in practice. More specifically, it examines how reflection functions in an urban elementary classroom populated by an African American teacher and African American students. Although this research sets out to respond to the impact of technorationalism on African American urban students, it ends up questioning any set of standards and beliefs that, when imposed on students, treats their backgrounds and experiences as deficit or marginal. In this regard, this research challenges practitioners to relent of solely objectifying teaching practice in order to give thoughtful consideration to the needs of each student. This research examines how a teacher uses reflective practice, not only for self-study, most importantly for self-scrutiny and modification of practice. The self- scrutiny exercised in this study was not for the mere sake of demonstrating an ability to be conscious of one's self. Rather this scrutiny was purposed for the sake of improved understanding of self and the encompassing identities, as well as understanding the impact of self on both students and practice. Much research shows how practitioners reflects on practice, but this research is one of few studies that presents the practitioner's reflective exercise in practice in the midst of uncertainties and unpredictabilities of teaching practice. Conducting this study on my own practice enabled me to make connections between the theory and practice, as well as to further underscore that reflective practice is an ongoing exercise of constructing meaning and restructuring practice as needed by students. This research adds to the body of

literature on how a teacher might use reflection to inform practice. Furthermore, it extends the body of literature that discusses how a teacher's subjectivities impact her perception of students and how those perceptions impact practice.

As I accepted the challenge of detailing why my story matters, I accepted the challenge of presenting why this research matters. I do not purport that my individual story is the single portrayal of the complexities of reflective practice among my professional peers. Although this research is about my self, my students, and my practice, its implications extend far beyond its immediate context. For the practitioner who operates solely as technicist, this research challenges the views and policies that protect the status quo and privileges of the norm, but neglects or fails students of diversity who lie outside of that norm. For the practitioner who operates solely on the basis of her subjective views, this research challenges the audacious misuse of power to impose a personal agenda on students with little or no esteem for those students' interests and backgrounds. For the practitioner seeking to find balance between all of the extremities that affect practice, this research offers the possibilities and dynamics of reflection to reconcile those ends. For the student expecting to be noticed, understood, and taught, this research offers a degree of hope, as well as a sanctioning of that expectation. For the policy makers, whether close or far removed from the classrooms and communities they service, this research implies that policies solely entrenched in technicism may have disparaging effects on diverse sects of students.

"Who cares?" These two words form a question, which may seem trivial, rhetorical, sarcastic, and even offensive. However, I believe that it is worthy of consideration, alongside the question, "Who should care?" This study is not significant because of who cares, but because of who suffers when care is withheld. Is my story of reflective practice among African American urban elementary students big enough or relevant enough to the technicist who fervently believes

that any practice not invoked by technical rationalism is faulty and creates or extends deficit in children? Perhaps not. However, when the stories of individual teachers and individual students who live outside of the status of a privileged majority are not considered, then teaching practice, inclusive of assessment measures and curricula development, are designed to marginalize, even dismiss, their intellectual, cultural, and social postures. While I cannot answer, "Who cares," beyond reflective practitioners and the students they directly serve, I can address "Who should care?" Every stakeholder in education should be concerned when students from any background are passively dismissed and labeled for their assumed deficits and failures. Overly consumed with standardized test scores and achievement measures, districts and stakeholders anxiously await quantitative outcomes to measure the presumed intellect of students and the effectiveness of teachers. My concern is not with measures of accountability, but with how these measures are designed, interpreted, and instituted to impact teachers and students in urban schools.

Further Research

Throughout this study I discussed the importance of considering alternate realities. This kind of consideration requires that the practitioner rise above and out of self to consider ideas that are outside of her immediate or most frequently accessed knowledge base. As I delved deeper and deeper into my study I learned that, although I attempted to view situations through multiple lenses and perspectives in search of alternate realities, I frequently defaulted into familiar thinking. I am lead to ponder how does a practitioner truly access alternate realities? Should these alternate realities challenge or complement the existing positions of the practitioner or of the student? My use of alternate realities was actually my use of ideas and experiences that I do not readily or frequently consider, and yet they were familiar enough to access. Sometimes, these alternate realities were ideas that countered or challenged my beliefs and positions. Nonetheless,

if these ideas are accessible from within then they are a part of my repertoire of experiences. In the area of practice, teachers should not assume satisfaction in employing strategies that are alternate to the extent that they are not readily presented in the script of technicism. Therefore, future research might examine how a teacher subdues what she readily recognizes and understands, in the interest of attaining to realities and possibilities outside of her experiences. This study would examine how a reflective practitioner develops a schema of alternatives that are outside of her. I believe that such a study could include an analysis of the dynamics of group reflective practice, peer collaborations, and professional learning communities, and teacher exchange programs: domestic and international.

Another possible area of future research is an examination of how context shapes a teacher's reflective practice. The context of this research is an urban elementary classroom in which the majority of the students and the teacher are African American. The community, businesses, and churches surrounding the school are predominantly African American. Some research (Hoekstra & Korthagen, 2011; Milner, 2003; Zeichner, 1995; Brookfield, 1987) suggests that context is a vital consideration in reflective practice. Future research might examine how teacher reflection occurs in schools of varying social, economic, and cultural climates. An even closer analysis might examine how one practitioner implements reflective practice when servicing students from varying demographic, social, cultural, and economic climates. For example, this could entail an analysis of mobile practitioners such as school based speech pathologists, occupational therapists, behavioral therapists, gifted teachers, and nurses who service multiple schools sites across diverse contexts.

A third area for possible research lies is how teachers are motivated and educated to become reflective practitioners. Some teachers may have an instinctual ability and provocation to

be reflective. Perhaps they transition their routines of reflection on their personal lives into their professional practice. However, others may default to the technicism of teaching craft because they do not know how to engage in reflective practice, or they loosely take things as they see them. Professional development workshops, teacher training courses, and teacher mentoring programs play a critical role in teacher training and may be considered as contexts for research for their role in developing reflective teachers. In order for reflection to be considered more than a retrospective recalling of events, teachers should be extended the training that enlightens them to the many possibilities of reflective practice.

I learned much of my self, my students, my practice, and the debilitating influence that technorationalism might have on both teaching and learning. It is my hope that this work will further inspire teaching practitioners, as well as other stakeholders in education, to reflect upon how their own subjectivities impact the decisions they make regarding students from diverse backgrounds.

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